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VOLUME IX, 1939-40

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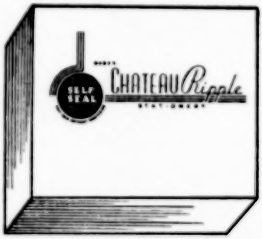

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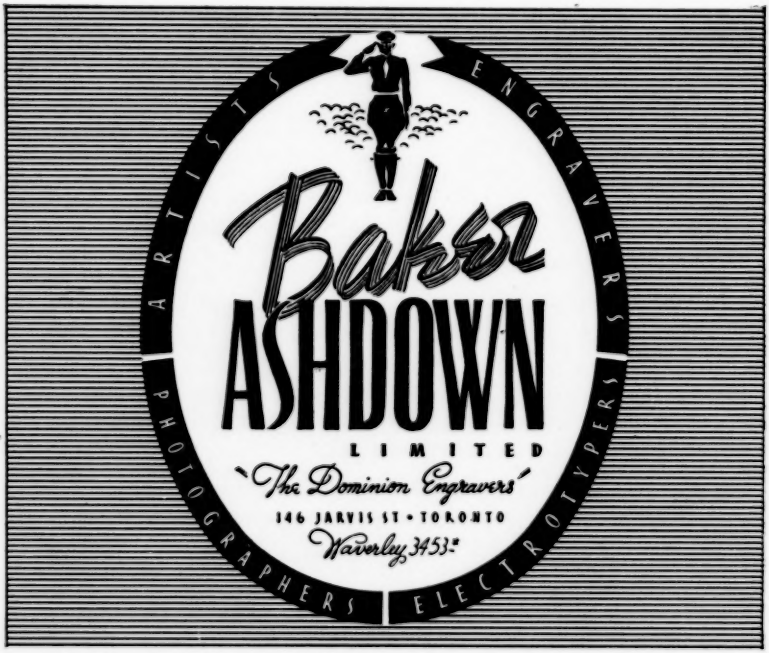

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AS THE STORM BROKE

C. P. Stacey

WHEN in the early morning of September 1, 1939, the guns of the old *Schleswig-Holstein*, firing on Westerplatte, announced the opening of the second World War, the alignment of the powers in the impending conflict, and the nature of the grand strategy which the combatants would follow, were anything but clear. It was obvious that Germany had burned her bridges and, taking the chance of the most terrible consequences for herself and for civilization, was recklessly attacking Poland. It was clear too that Britain and France were fully committed to each other and to Poland's cause. Beyond this, all was uncertainty; and as the end of the first month of war drew on the clouds had not dispersed.

The diplomatic bombshell which Soviet Russia exploded under the western powers on August 23—the sudden conclusion of a non-aggression pact with Germany—signalled, as we now know, the imminence of the temporary extinction of Poland. Mr Chamberlain's campaign, undertaken at the eleventh hour, to build up a great coalition against aggression, had suffered a staggering reverse. Russia had cleared the track for the German war machine; and it soon became evident that the enigmatic despot in the Kremlin, acting with a coldly cynical treachery which no Romanoff could have bettered, was resolved to have his own share of the spoil, and that a large one. Today, in consequence, Russia, if not actually at war with France and Britain, appears to have an interest in their defeat; and failing developments in her relations with Germany which, for the moment, at least, may be hoped for rather than expected, it is not impossible that she will work for their defeat in a more or less active fashion. It is still hard, however, to believe that she really desires a sweeping German victory.

To this extent the new understanding between the Brown and Red dictators was a disaster. It is possible, however, that it will yet prove to have its compensations. It has certainly helped to keep Spain neutral, nullifying the danger to the Allies which was latent in General Franco's fascist-aided victory. It is still early to speak of Italy, but that Catholic country, never enthusiastic over the idea of fighting in a German quarrel, will clearly be still less so now; economic and diplomatic support will probably be the

most that Hitler will get from his Axis partner. As for Japan, her first reaction to Germany's *rapprochement* with her own potential enemy was apparently one of disillusionment and disgust. The possibility of an assault by Japan upon British possessions in the Pacific simultaneous with the German aggression in Europe was thus for the moment removed. Nevertheless, Japan is Japan still; her own armistice with Russia, concluded as Stalin's troops marched into Poland, is evidence that she will bear watching; and it is quite probable that if her circumstances permit she will yet attempt to make capital in Asia out of Britain's preoccupations in the west.

Somewhat apart from the tangle of alliance and counter-alliance stands the great imponderable, with whom nevertheless the last word may yet ultimately rest: the United States of America. Of where its sympathies lie there is no doubt whatever. The strong elements friendly to Germany which were in evidence in American opinion in 1914 are almost wholly absent today. The Americans have for years past been confirmed Hitler-haters, and now they are more so than ever. (The present writer was genuinely astonished the other day when he heard an audience in a New York film theatre warmly applaud newsreels of Canada's declaration of war and mobilization; in ten years' residence in the United States, it was the first time that he had ever seen the slightest evidence of popular interest in anything Canadian.) Yet Americans certainly want to stay out of the war, and for this it is hard to blame them. As the *New Yorker* puts it, "Our people dislike Hitler and they want him soundly beaten by a couple of other fellows." Whether they will be able indefinitely to indulge in the luxury of taking sides mentally while physically staying neutral remains to be seen; but of immediate intervention there is no prospect. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility that it will be in complications in the Far East, rather than in Europe, that the republic will encounter the gravest danger of involvement.

At this moment, as we face the inscrutable crisis (so different from that of 1914) and try to map the probable course of the struggle, two books come to hand to aid us in tracing in retrospect the path by which we descended into the abyss, and in calculating the chances of the dark days ahead.* The authors are two eminent

**Step by Step, 1936-1939*, by the Rt. Hon. Winston S. Churchill, Thornton Butterworth [Toronto, Nelson], 1939, $3.75.

The Defence of Britain, by Liddell Hart, Faber and Faber [Toronto, Ryerson], 1939, $3.75.

Englishmen who have both played leading parts in rousing their countrymen, in these last years, to fuller realization of their peril. One is Mr Winston Churchill, eminent alike as author and as statesman, whose revelations of, and assaults upon, Britain's unpreparedness kept him out of the Cabinet while peace endured but brought him into it—back to the Admiralty where 1914 also found him—the moment war came. The other is Captain B. H. Liddell Hart, the distinguished if unorthodox military historian and critic, whose role in the recent army reforms has evidently been one of some importance. Mr Churchill's book is merely a compilation of his fortnightly letters on public affairs, written during the past three years, but it has far more interest than such fugitive material usually possesses when collected. Liddell Hart provides us with an analysis of Britain's military situation on the eve of war, and includes most urgent suggestions for the conduct of the struggle which, when the book was published (in July), was probable but not yet certain.

Today there is no virtue in recrimination; but it is fair to point out that both authors levelled destructive criticism at pre-war government policy in Britain, and both probably feel today that events have justified their strictures. Mr Churchill in particular has seen his own gloomy prophecies come true with uncanny regularity, in the face of the contrary assertions of some who are now his colleagues, and has seen policies which he long advocated in vain adopted in the end under the pressure of hard facts. In June of 1936, for instance, he called for "a Grand Alliance of all the nations who wish for peace against the Potential Aggressor, whoever he may be"; and now, in a foot-note, he observes, "This policy was at length adopted in substance by Mr Chamberlain in March, 1939." At an even earlier date Churchill wrote: "I can see only one thing. I see it sharper and harsher day by day. Germany is arming more strenuously, more scientifically and upon a larger scale, than any nation has ever armed before." This and other comments on German re-armament, which many people, including responsible ministers, called alarmist at the time they were made, do not make particularly pleasant reading today. Liddell Hart, whose book takes full account of political as well as purely military factors, was as dubious as Mr Churchill about the Chamberlain policies; he regards the post-Munich world as much less favourable to the democracies in a strategic sense than

that before Munich, obviously considering (with what sound judgment it is now only too clear) that the large but ill-equipped forces of Poland were a poor substitute for Czechoslovakia's thirty-five to forty admirably armed and trained divisions, her border fortifications, and her important munition industry. These two books are material for the historian of the future, and if he accepts them at their face value he is unlikely to rank Mr Chamberlain's pre-war foreign policy very high on the score of effectiveness, however much he may appreciate and admire its motives. But we must add that one at least of Liddell Hart's apprehensions has not been justified by the event. He feared lest the Government's perseverance with policies which so many Britons disliked and mistrusted might ultimately bring the country into war disunited. It has in fact had the opposite effect: the men who called for a firm stand against aggression in the days before Munich, and the determined appeasers who were so bitterly disillusioned after Prague, are now of one mind. Britain has probably never been more thoroughly united than on that grim Sunday when Mr Chamberlain announced the existence of a state of war. And whatever practical considerations may be urged in condemnation of the long continuance of appeasement, it had at least a certain moral advantage which may yet be very valuable: by clinging to it until all hope was gone, the British Government has pretty effectively convinced the world at large that its attachment to peace was genuine and that the responsibility for the new war lies elsewhere.

It may well be that our hypothetical future historian, scanning the pre-War world of 1933-9, will discover its most astonishing feature in the military recovery of Germany during these years. The creation of the mechanized army that has lately rolled across Poland with such brutal efficiency is a remarkable fact; but not less remarkable was the slowness of Britain in realizing what was happening. It will be difficult to explain to Englishmen of the generations to come that in 1934 the Reich possessed (officially, at least) no air force whatever, and that nevertheless in 1938 it suddenly became apparent that it possessed one more formidable than those of Britain and France together! Britain awoke very late to the knowledge that Mr Churchill had been right about what was going on; but the year's respite since Munich has had one good effect at least: it has seen her own tremendous rearmament

programme finally bearing excellent fruit. Liddell Hart has great confidence in Mr Hore-Belisha as Secretary of State for War, and while he is undoubtedly prejudiced (as a result of the Secretary's receptiveness to his own ideas) the confidence is probably justified on other grounds. The country's air force, as well as its ground defences against air attack, have clearly made very great progress during 1939; and there can be no doubt that the measures taken to nullify the effect of such attack during the first weeks of war, when it was not attempted, will materially reduce the danger from it when (as seems almost inevitable) it ultimately materializes.

Liddell Hart's book is extremely pertinent at a moment when many people are expressing perturbation over what some interpret as the sluggishness of the democracies in the western theatre of war: the cautious and measured manner in which the French have approached the outworks of the German fortified positions, the failure of the British to use their air force to leap across those works and assail the vulnerable areas of Germany. The pitiful tragedy in Poland has lent force to the demands for a bold Allied offensive in the west; yet such demands receive no countenance from Liddell Hart. His strategic doctrine is based upon the theory (for which a very strong case can certainly be made out) that modern weapons have materially increased those natural advantages of the defence over the attack whose existence Clausewitz acknowledged over a century ago. He argues from the experience of the last war, and in particular from those tremendous final offensives in the spring and summer of 1918, in which, he declares, the German army ensured its own defeat by wearing itself out in headlong attacks, that "our chief risk of losing a war lies in trying to 'win the war'—by pursuing the mirage of decisive victory on the battlefield." Such victory is possible today, he believes, only between antagonists of very unequal strength; in other circumstances, "defence is the best attack." The author did not foresee Russia's actually joining in the attack upon Poland, and thought, as most of us did, rather in terms of her aligning herself with the Allies. He thus gives us no exact prescription for the present very difficult situation. But clearly he would argue that with Poland gone the best plan is to operate against Germany by blockade (a weapon whose effectiveness is somewhat reduced, unfortunately, by the possibility of the Reich's receiving economic assistance from Russia and Italy), while sedulously refraining from any general

offensive in the west and leaving it to the Germans to ruin themselves there by the process of attacks against prepared positions, a process well calculated to disillusion the German people and produce the internal upheaval for which the Allies are hoping. The picture is an agreeable one, so far as anything in war today can be agreeable; it offers an expedient through which the Allies may profit by their superiority in economic strength while conserving their manpower, and though it promises a long war they can stand the strain better than the enemy. There are a good many indications, at the moment of writing, that some such conception is at the bottom of the Anglo-French strategy. General Gamelin assuredly will not complain if the Germans choose to hurl their divisions at his defences in an attempt to repeat the great invasion of 1914; they will find the Anglo-French armies and the French (or Belgian) frontier fortifications a different matter from poor Poland. Whether Hitler will oblige by ordering his men forward to such an enterprise is the question. If he does not, there will be no lack of people to argue that the German fortifications, recently and hastily constructed, must be less formidable than those of France, and that, if they are to be forced at all, the attack should be made before they are strengthened.

So far the ex-housepainter has had things his own way. Exploiting to the utmost the advantage of the new understanding with Russia, he has executed his destructive programme with great cleverness. Having passed the stage where aggrandizement could be obtained by the mere threat of force without actually fighting, his desire in the early autumn of 1939 was for a limited war which would destroy Poland without embroiling him with France and Britain. Although these countries persisted in declaring war, he continued to hope that they would accept the accomplished fact of Poland's partition and make peace after the deed was done. Geography and Russian connivance have enabled him to succeed with the first part of his scheme. The Western powers have been saddled with the military disadvantage of being able to aid Poland only by undertaking a premature and probably unsuccessful assault upon permanent fortifications (which they declined to do), and thereafter with the moral disadvantage, as he hoped it might prove, of assuming the responsibility for continuing the war when it was possible to end it. At the same time Hitler, by deliberately refraining from the aerial bombardments of London and Paris which had been anticipated, made it morally difficult for the British to

undertake on their own account the strategic offensive in the air which was their best hope of doing Germany immediate harm; for they had been determined not to be responsible for beginning this sort of war, and the special vulnerability of London was a further deterrent. (It is just possible that Hitler has been somewhat impressed by the frequent repetition of the opinion that nothing would do more to bring the United States into a European conflict than the bombing of London.) Germany has showed no such scruples on the eastern front; Polish civilians have apparently been bombed with the utmost ferocity; but the more-than-Machiavellian combination of politic restraint in the west with barbarous massacre in the east has so far served the *Führer* well. He has even ordered his submarine commanders, it would seem, to conform with international law where possible; though the one who (quite probably acting against orders) sank the *Athenia* in the first hours of hostilities certainly destroyed much of the effect of his Government's attempt to appear lily-white.

The fact remains that for all his ingenuity Hitler has failed in his main purpose. He has not succeeded in raising appeasement from the grave to which his own actions last spring consigned it. He is still at war with Britain and France. He has on his hands, in other words, not the limited war which, as Clausewitz would put it, would have been simply a continuation by other means of his previous policy of gradual aggrandizement; not the war with a weak and isolated people—such as the Ethiopians, the Albanians, or the Poles—which is the delight and the stay of the modern dictator; but a conflict waged with deep determination by two very powerful democratic communities who have taken up the sword reluctantly, but who, conceiving themselves the champions of international decency and world order, are unlikely to lay it down before their task is done. The struggle may be long and bitter; there is every reason to believe that when Hitler perceives that his first scheme has failed he will throw off restraint and fight in the savage manner more natural to his kind; but the odds against him, both moral and physical, are too great for victory.

Merely to defeat the immediate menace of Hitlerism, however, is not enough. If only for the sake of maintaining our own Empire, whose strength and unity are certain to be most gravely menaced if such crises as the present one are to be allowed to recur at short intervals, the conditions which have produced Hitlerism must be removed. And it cannot be said too often—especially now, when

we find ourselves once more surrounded by the mounting hysteria of war—that the events of the past twenty years have proved most conclusively that no permanent security can be founded upon a smashing military victory followed by a Carthaginian peace. The situation in which we find ourselves at this moment is the result of just that erroneous assumption. It is useless to think of keeping a great nation in a permanent state of subjection and humiliation; the ultimate result is certain to be its recovery under a government appealing to nationalism in its crudest form, and living only for revenge. Apart from all other lessons of the recent past, let us remember that the existence, in British minds especially, of an unhappy sense of bad conscience over Versailles undoubtedly facilitated Hitler's early triumphs. The feeling that the unilateral disarmament imposed on Germany in 1919 had been unfair helped to prevent the former Allies from acting when Hitler insisted on re-arming, and influenced Britain actually to approve the process in the naval agreement of 1935; the feeling that it had been rather extreme to deprive a nation of sovereignty over its own territory helped to prevent action when Hitler occupied the Rhineland in 1936; the feeling that the prohibition of the union of Germany and Austria had been contrary to the principle of self-determination was a factor in causing the Allies to hold their hands when the *Anschluss* took place in 1938. The settlement of 1919 was not as bad a settlement as Hitler says it was, but it was bad enough; and merely for the sake of our own interests, the greatest of which is peace, it is essential to avoid another such in our time.

The immediate and paramount task at this moment is to win the war; but let us not lose sight of the even more important task that will come after. The more this war can be fought in the spirit of Mr Chamberlain's initial declaration that the Allies are fighting, not the German people, but Hitlerism; the more we can avoid allowing mere hatred bred of propaganda to take possession of us, the better are our chances for making a genuinely just and lasting peace when the time comes. It must be such a peace as will encourage the Germans, without whose participation in the European system the continent cannot flourish, to accept a partnership in the peaceful development of the world. Perhaps this is a great deal to hope for; but it is hard to see any other chance of avoiding the further recurrence of such ordeals as we are now entering upon for the second time in a generation.

THE CASE FOR MARK TWAIN'S WIFE

DeLancey Ferguson

A FEW years ago it was usual for a successful man to ascribe all his success to his mother or his wife. Usually he was lying. The chances were that he would have succeeded as well had he been an unmarried orphan. The unsuccessful man also, after the fifth drink, used to confide that he might have amounted to something if his wife hadn't held him down and cramped his style. He was usually lying, too. But only recently has biography imitated the bar-fly. Any woman in the life of a great man is nowadays in a dangerous spot. If she has openly and demonstrably misbehaved, she need expect no chivalrous silence about her sins. If she has been the soul of chastity and circumspection, she will catch it just the same. Men of genius are proverbially gey ill to live with; women so indiscreet as to fall in love with them need seldom expect easy times. And nowadays they are begrudged even posthumous credit for their endurance. Ambrose Bierce's phrase about the "virtues and other vices" is applied literally. Since no artist is perfect, since every achievement must fall short of the ideal, biographers have sought in the intimate environment of the artist the explanation of his imperfection.

The jargon in which these psychoanalytical speculations are couched has disguised their essential primitiveness. They return to Adam's childish effort to blame somebody else. Aristotle was more mature: he said that a hero falls because of some tragic flaw in himself. The romantic biographers who attribute the despair of James Thomson to the death of his early sweetheart, or who explain the tortured personality of D. H. Lawrence by a mother-fixation, are putting the cart before the horse. An inner weakness in the man enabled these external influences to warp him permanently. It is time for the psychoanalytical school of biography to grow up and face reality.

The most influential example of this kind of biography thus far produced in America is Mr Van Wyck Brooks's *The Ordeal of Mark Twain*. Mr Brooks's thesis is simple. Mark Twain, potentially a great satirist, was frightened away from his natural method of expression by the pressure of *bourgeois* respectability, represented

in his youth by his mother, and in his mature life by his wife. This thwarting of his natural impulses embittered him as a man, and crippled him as an artist.

I pass over Jane Lampton's supposed power over her son. Mr DeVoto has already discredited the thesis. The dramatic episode of which Brooks makes the most is of dubious authenticity, and it is possible to believe that young Sam Clemens kept—for a while—a promise not to drink or gamble without believing that it blighted his life. Before his literary career started he had spent five years as journeyman printer, three years on the river, and five years as miner and newspaper man in Nevada and California. Nothing that he wrote was ever submitted to his mother's criticism; none of his letters to his family indicates that "Ma" had interest in literary matters. Even for his piloting, another psychological explanation strikes deeper than the mother-fixation thesis of Mr Brooks. But speculations in psychology must wait. Our first concern is with outer and demonstrable facts.

The case against Olivia Langdon is far stronger. The daughter of a prosperous business man in a small city, Olivia may fairly be charged with all the *bourgeois* "virtues and other vices" which the Western Clemens had partly escaped. Though Max Eastman declares that Elmira was far from being a backwater of religious orthodoxy, he gives us no reason to doubt Olivia's acceptance of the social orthodoxy which ladies of her generation shared with Queen Victoria. A gentleman did not swear; a gentleman did not smoke before ladies, and if he were a real gentleman did not smoke in the house; a gentleman was careful to dress like everyone else and to say nothing to hint that he did not think like everyone else—and so on. Her class had exalted the aging poets and essayists of New England to a dictatorship such as Tennyson alone among their British contemporaries had achieved. Oliver Wendell Holmes represented that culture on its purely social side, and to Holmes the cut of a man's cravat or his intonation in naming the sacred towns of New England was almost as important as his views on heaven and hell.

All this is substantially true. There may be some basis, too, for the facile generalization of Mr Brooks and Mr Josephson that Jarvis Langdon's class willingly accepted the creative artist only when the artist could justify his works by making money out of them. At least it is true that Langdon had reared his daughter in

modest affluence; that her health was frail, and that Langdon expected his son-in-law to maintain her in comfort if not in luxury. Not that Langdon applied direct pressure. He generously financed a newspaper partnership, thereby effectively applying pressure indirectly. Mark Twain had to succeed financially to justify his father-in-law's faith in him. Yet the outcome of the Buffalo experiment shows that he was not wholly swallowed by the Langdon *mores*—in less than two years he had sold out his interest in the *Express* at a heavy loss, and had quit Buffalo and journalism forever. Thenceforth he succeeded in his own way, not Langdon's.

But Olivia's influence was ever present. Mark Twain loved her—a fact which, to judge from some recent writings, is in itself enough to ruin any genius. More, he adored her in the best tradition of Victorian sentiment which professed to regard women as beings of finer clay who, for some inexplicable but charitable reason, stooped to accept the love of men. Olivia's frail health increased her power by evoking the protective instincts of a sympathetic man. She was, moreover, deeply interested in her husband's work, and had an unfailing wifely concern for the impressions he made on other people. But before considering her censorship of his writings, a glance at one or two of her other reform movements will be illuminating.

She began her domestic life by holding family worship, to the astonishment of Western friends who had never expected to see and hear Mark Twain saying grace and joining in prayer. She undertook to curb his smoking, and he acquiesced. She disapproved of strong language, and Mark took heed to his ways, that he offended not with his tongue. Ten months or so after his marriage he boasted to Twichell that he had conquered the tobacco habit to please Livy—never smoked any more except for two hours on Sunday, and he'd give up even that indulgence if she asked him to: "not that I believe there was the faintest *reason* in the matter, but just as I would deprive myself of sugar in my coffee if she wished it, or quit wearing socks if she thought them immoral." But yet again a little while, and we find him smoking continuously—the stogies and full-flavoured corn-cob pipes that made his visits a headache to Mrs Howells, whose husband did not smoke at all. Next his conscience rebelled over the Bible readings; he told Livy how he felt about them, and family worship ceased. According to his own account, he held out longest in the matter of profanity,

at least in his wife's hearing. The most joyous story in the *Autobiography* relates how at last she overheard him expressing his feelings over buttonless shirts when he thought the bathroom door was shut. She undertook to shame him by repeating his last and strongest remark:

> In my lifetime I had never heard anything so out of tune, so inharmonious, so incongruous, so ill suited to each other as were those mighty words set to that feeble music. I tried to keep from laughing . . . and I succeeded—until she gravely said, "There, now you know how it sounds."
>
> Then I exploded; the air was filled with my fragments, and you could hear them whiz. I said, "Oh, Livy, if it sounds like that, God forgive me, I will never do it again."
>
> Then she had to laugh, herself. Both of us broke into convulsions, and went on laughing until we were physically exhausted and spiritually reconciled.

This was fairly early in their married life. On the trip around the world in 1896 he made another of his periodical efforts to reform, and evidently told Livy. He got along all right until in taking medicine he smashed a tumbler, and then threw his measuring glass, instead of the broken tumbler, out of the cabin window. Then he released his voice. Livy's comment was, "Don't reform any more, it isn't any improvement."

These episodes bear definitely on the question of Olivia's influence on her husband's writing. They are plain instances of efforts to amend his ways. He offered himself a devoted sacrifice to her reforming spirit, and tried loyally, for longer or shorter periods, to do as she wished. But in every case it was finally Livy who yielded. Family prayers were abandoned and never resumed; tobacco continued to be as the breath of life to Mark Twain; his violent and picturesque objurgations continued, and gained richness and variety with the years. Perhaps, though, her influence on his literary work was different.

All conclusions regarding the nature and extent of Olivia's censorship must be tentative. Final judgment could be reached only by detailed study of manuscript material not yet accessible. But the evidence in print has been elaborately marshalled by Mr Brooks.

Olivia, says Mr Brooks, "had no artistic ideal for her husband; . . . she regarded his natural liking for bold and masculine language . . . merely as a literary equivalent of bad manners, as something that endangered their common prestige in the eyes of conventional opinion." The most familiar story has to do with

Huck Finn's comment, at the end of *Tom Sawyer*, on the blessings of civilization. "They comb me all to hell," said Huck, as his creator originally reported the words. But Howells demurred. The book was intended for children; so vigorous a phrase wouldn't do. "I'd have that swearing out in an instant." Olivia agreed, emphatically, and the word became "thunder."

Again she objected to words like "stench," "offal," and "breech-clout" in *Following the Equator*, and said she'd take them out of the language. To which her husband replied, "You are steadily weakening the English tongue, Livy." And then we have his detailed description in the *Autobiography* of how the censorship was applied:

> She would sit on the porch at the farm and read aloud, with her pencil in her hand, and the children would keep an alert and suspicious eye upon her right along, for the belief was well grounded in them that whenever she came across a particularly satisfactory passage she would strike it out. . . . The passages which were so satisfactory to them always had an element of strength in them which sorely needed modification or expurgation, and was always sure to get it at their mother's hand. For my own entertainment, and to enjoy the protests of the children, I often abused my editor's innocent confidence. I often interlarded remarks of a studied and felicitously atrocious character purposely to achieve the children's delight to see the pencil do its fatal work. I often joined my supplications to the children's for mercy, and strung the argument out and pretended to be in earnest. . . . Now and then we gained the victory and there was much rejoicing. Then I privately struck the passage out myself. . . .

Olivia unquestionably acted as censor. The question is: Was censorship needed, and how much was lost by it?

Admittedly Mark Twain had even less capacity for self-criticism than have most geniuses. He constantly set out enthusiastically on the composition of quite impossible books. "Life in the Interior of an Iceberg," "3000 Years Among the Microbes," "Those Extraordinary Twins" are merely a few of the unworkable ideas he wasted time and labour on. But he also realized that in the heat of composition he was apt to lose sight of his work's effect on the reader, and accordingly sought, and followed, other people's judgment. On the *Quaker City* excursion, before he had met Olivia, Mrs Fairbanks was his mentor, and he tore up pages of manuscript which she condemned. The original letters from Palestine, written when Mrs Fairbanks was not with him, are noticeably rowdier than the others. But to weigh the nature and effects of Olivia's censorship we have not only to consider what she deleted, but to

compare the passed and published result with what Mark's contemporaries got away with.

Besides objecting to certain emphatic monosyllables, Olivia had vigorous opinions on taste in general, and was revolted by the macabre and gruesome. In this latter most readers would agree with her. A fruit of Mark Twain's frontier life was a tendency to treat death and decay as funny. The same phenomenon, from the same causes, appears in wartime humour. But such jesting is either a defence mechanism or an adolescent carry-over. Only juvenile wit sees anything really comic in the smell of Limburger cheese, for instance. And far too much of Mark Twain's earlier humour is on the Limburger level. "The Undertaker's Love-Story" has not been published; both Olivia and Howells condemned it, and one inclines to support their judgment sight unseen. The secrets of the charnel house are not funny to readers with sensitive minds and viscera.

We know also that Olivia vetoed her husband's plan of publishing *Huck Finn* and *The Prince and the Pauper* in a single volume. He thought they could go together because they were both about boys. It was as congruous as proposing to combine *Cranford* and the *Spoon River Anthology*, because they are both about villages. Olivia was right, even if her reason—that *The Prince* was the better book—was wrong. And when she insisted on the deletion of a grotesque caricature of her husband in *Life on the Mississippi*, one can only wish she had gone farther and vetoed the whole cheap business of cartooning the author.

The censorship of vocabulary is a matter of taste also, but one in which the past half-century has seen a radical change. Messrs Joyce, Hemingway, and Faulkner have left few words unwritten. But the theory behind such a remark as Mr Brooks's about "bold and masculine" language, and behind the practice of Hemingway and Faulkner, involves a huge fallacy—that strength depends on vocabulary. By this theory, certain of Jonathan Swift's private letters, wherein he told smutty stories, ought to be stronger writing than *A Modest Proposal* or *Gulliver*, in which the vocabulary is sternly decorous. Stevenson, writing *Treasure Island*, complained: "The trouble is to work it off without oaths. Buccaneers without oaths—bricks without straw. But youth and the fond parent have to be consulted." Yet somehow, despite the handicap, Stevenson produced the best buccaneer story ever written. It is

doubtful if *A Farewell to Arms*, using most of the "strong" words there are, is a better war story than *The Red Badge of Courage*, which employs chaster speech. Every age imposes its special taboos of theme and diction, yet somehow every age, within its limitations, produces durable literature. In removing a few "hells" and "stenches" Olivia undoubtedly made her husband's work more acceptable to his contemporaries, and did little to impair its permanent quality.

But the case against her goes beyond censorship of diction. She is charged with emasculating Mark Twain's work by vetoing his use of really strong themes and confining him to humour and such pretty-pretty subjects as *The Prince and the Pauper* and *Joan of Arc*. Here the criticism tends to a fallacy even larger than that of vocabulary. To blame a nineteenth-century writer for not choosing twentieth-century themes is both unfair and silly. Sound literary criticism requires that a man be judged first by the standards of his own age, and only secondarily by those of the critic's. Bernard Shaw, for instance, points out that Shakespeare was not socially minded. This is true, but beside the point. The Renaissance was an age of individualism. We can no more justly censure Shakespeare in this regard than we can condemn Dante for ignorance of Copernican astronomy and post-Columbian geography. Mark Twain wrote in the late Victorian period—a period whose general characteristics were much the same in America as in England. His strength or weakness must therefore be judged first by comparison with his Victorian contemporaries.

Even the most violent critics of the Victorian spirit admit that despite it the age produced great art. Everyone knows how Thackeray wept because he could not show Pendennis completing a seduction; everyone knows Stevenson's complaint that the public's demands gagged the novelist with linsey-woolsey. Stevenson doubted that he could handle David Balfour's love story adequately because he was a most fanatical lover of plain physical sensations plainly and expressly rendered, and to do David's love in the same spirit as he had described David's fear and exhaustion in his flight through the heather—"my dear sir, there were grossness—ready made! And hence, how to sugar?" Yet both Stevenson and Thackeray achieved their main objectives. The perfect Victorian novelist was Mark Twain's friend and critic, William Dean Howells. His books deal with respectable middle-class people; passion, licit

or illicit, has no part in them; nothing he wrote could bring a blush to Miss Podsnap's cheek. But it is by comparison with Howells and Trollope and Stevenson, not with Sinclair Lewis and Ernest Hemingway, that we must judge Mark Twain.

Looking at Mark Twain's books by this light, the first thing that strikes us is their extraordinary frankness. The grimmest details are handled calmly, objectively, without underscoring but without prettifying. An amazing anthology of realism could be compiled from the books which the early public considered pure humour—items like the descriptions of Italian and Levantine beggars and filth and poverty in *The Innocents;* the unvarnished and unromanticized stories of Slade and other frontier gunmen in *Roughing It;* above all, the graphic adventures of Huck Finn. Where else in the literature of the 1870's and 1880's are such descriptions as old man Finn's delirium tremens, the shooting of Boggs the drunkard, the murder of Buck Grangerford and his brothers? Under cover of the jester's motley, a humourist could tell things the public would have repudiated from a "serious" novelist.

But Mark Twain's freedom was not limited to bits of realistic detail. He used themes taboo to men like Howells. Modern critics have been blinded to this aspect of his work because he took the taboo material in his stride; he made it the more forceful by taking it for granted. The foundation of *Puddenhead Wilson,* for example, is the moral overhead of slavery, the relations of white masters with slave women, and the degradation to slave status of children with only a minute fraction of Negro blood. If any other American author in the nineteenth century handled that ticklish theme of miscegenation, and handled it without preaching, I have yet to find the book in which it was done. Similarly, Mr DeVoto has pointed out that *The Gilded Age* pictures of crooked politics and ruthless exploitation of public resources in private interests are unique in their generation. And who else in that generation wrote such a scathing arraignment of Southern "chivalry," with supporting documents of shootings and lynchings, as Mark Twain published, and got away with, in Chapter 40 of *Life on the Mississippi?* The more one reads of American literature from 1865 to 1900, the more one is astonished by the vigour, freedom, and courage of Mark Twain. Somehow he accomplished more under censorship than was accomplished by contemporaries who had not the handicap of being married to Olivia Langdon. The indictment

against her collapses of its own weight before the evidence of what her husband did.

Yet the further charge must be met, that American materialism, as personified by Olivia, her family and her environment, forced Mark Twain to commercialize himself, to devote to money-making the energies that should have gone into creation, and to seek big sales as proof of literary success. The current generation of critics is wiser than Edmund Burke, who declared that he did not know the method of drawing up an indictment against a whole people.

Once more we face an elementary exercise in the method of proof. To substantiate these charges it is not enough to assert that American materialism hampered the artist. The life of the artist everywhere is compromise between his art and his bread and butter. Proof must be found that the artist in America faced unique handicaps; that he was forced to do things which artists in other countries and periods did not have to do. If temperaments similar to Mark Twain's led writers elsewhere to conduct similar to his, the special indictment of America is quashed.

It is true that the American writer, prior to 1891, suffered one handicap not shared equally by his contemporaries overseas. That handicap was material, not spiritual. The lack of international copyright deprived the American of the profits on foreign editions of his books and exposed him at home to ruthless competition from foreign works cheaply reprinted and widely circulated without payment to their authors. Thus far the charge that America was particularly hard on the literary artist is upheld.

But is Olivia Langdon, or American society at large, to blame for Mark Twain's lavish scale of living, for the gambling mania which drove him into one get-rich-quick scheme after another? Is that trait peculiarly American? To ask the question is to answer it. In England, in the previous generation, Charles Dickens, earning money on a scale seldom vouchsafed to men of letters, had lived up to his income and sometimes beyond it. So sensitive was he to public response that he would reorganize his plots in midstream of composition if serial sales began to lag. Commercialization of art could hardly go further; yet Dickens, not satisfied with the returns from literary and editorial work, at last killed himself by the strain of public readings given to make still more money. In France, theoretically a home of pure art, Balzac and Dumas lived in a chronic fever of bankruptcy; no matter how

fast the money came in they managed always to keep expenditures several jumps ahead of income.

Nor can we even blame the commercial spirit of the nineteenth century at large. Sir Walter Scott was bred, and lived, in a society where talent and family connections meant almost everything; where the poor man of good family entered unquestioned the innermost circles, and where wealth mattered as little as it has ever mattered anywhere in the western world. Scott's family position was excellent; his profession assured him of additional respect. Yet his life is the same story of writing with eye fixed on the publisher's balance sheet, of lavish expenditure, reckless speculation, and ultimate bankruptcy, which marks the career of Mark Twain in the sordid materialistic United States. For that matter, Shakespeare himself had a keen and unfaltering interest in the box-office returns.

All these novelists shared one trait at least—the playboy desire for showing off. It is the Tom Sawyer quality of the normal small boy, carried over into manhood. Most actors and public men have it. Mark Twain loved recognition: when Australian larrikins called "Good-night, Mark," or an Austrian police sergeant passed him through the lines, his cup of happiness ran over. He liked to be noticed in the crowds on Fifth Avenue; he went back upstairs and came down another way at the Willard Hotel in Washington in order to be seen by the crowd in the lobby.

It is easy to call this vanity and egotism. Mr Brooks considers it a defence mechanism to salve thwarted artistic conscience. It was vanity, in a sense; it was even a defence mechanism in a sense, but not, I think, in the sense Mr Brooks intends. Mark Twain craved recognition, fame, wealth, power, but he craved them for a deeper and subtler reason than the desire of lavish and vulgar display. He loved comfort; he loved the good things of this world, whether they were whisky, food, or furniture. But behind this love was a sensitive nature's need for shelter. He was not a coward, not a fugitive from life, but his quivering nervous make-up urged him to seek protection that a coarser temperament would not need.

His high-strung nerves, for example, were abnormally sensitive to noise. Small irritations which the average senses ignore could all his life stir him to rage and profanity. He could not abide a ticking clock; squalling cats and barking dogs could drive him almost insane. His physical strength was never great; intense

nervous energy gave the endurance which frequently astonished and exhausted his friends. The absurdity of Mr Brooks's attempt to connect this sensitivity with the influence of his mother and the roughness of frontier life is evident when we glance at Mark Twain's children. They were reared in an environment different in every respect from that of their father's youth—sheltered, loved, encouraged in every form of self-expression. Yet Susy, as her father describes her, was a quickened feminine version of himself, intense, gay, fluttering, imaginative; careless of money, property, and time. In Jean her father's febrile nerves were intensified into epilepsy. Mark Twain's temperament was a product of his make-up, not of a social system.

Admittedly the rough life of river and mining camp was hard on such a make-up. Sensitivity and pride combined, for instance, to make Mark Twain loathe and resent practical jokes, and practical jokes were a staple of frontier humour. Neither public opinion nor a police force existed in any form which could restrain violence, coarseness, or cruelty of action. Men lived in the lodging houses of Virginia City as in army barracks, and without even the modicum of protection which comes from the discipline and responsibility of the soldier. Ragging was constant. Mark Twain's friends loved him, but they couldn't resist the temptation of teasing him with tapping on the walls or hiding his things, just to hear his vivid cursing. Sensitive men thrust into army life can be driven to frenzy or something like shell-shock without ever being in action, from the mere destruction of privacy; Mark Twain suffered torments from his exacerbated nerves under similar conditions.

In the tumultuous world of the Mississippi only one man was reasonably safe from affronts and stood in a position of unquestioned authority. That man was the pilot. He was a sovereign and an autocrat; his word was law. It was not the repressed wish to be an artist that drove Mark Twain to the appalling task of learning the river; it was the need for security. At what cost to his tense nervous organization he won this security is revealed by a fact he mentioned in old age. Whenever he was worried or overwrought, he told Paine, two nightmares recurred regularly:

> There is never a month passes that I do not dream of being in reduced circumstances, and obliged to go back to the river to earn a living. It is never a pleasant dream, either. I love to think about these days, but there's always something sickening about the thought that I have been obliged to go back to them, and usually in my dream I am just about to start into a black shadow

without being able to tell whether it is Selma bluff, or Hat Island, or only a black wall of night.

Another dream that I have of that kind is being compelled to go back to the lecture platform. I hate that dream worse than the other. In it I am always getting up before an audience with nothing to say, trying to be funny; trying to make the audience laugh, realizing that I am only making silly jokes. Then the audience realizes it, and pretty soon they commence to get up and leave. That dream always ends by my standing there in the semi-darkness talking to an empty house.

Interpretation of these dreams needs no Freudian subtleties. They are obviously fear dreams. The nervous tension of piloting had burnt itself into his consciousness until every subsequent strain and anxiety expressed itself in terms of the river. And so with the lecturing. Mark Twain loved lecturing, while he was on the platform and holding his audience spellbound, but he loathed the strain of travel, of schedules, of hotel living, which filled twenty-three hours of the day. He paid the price for the pilot's freedom, but he paid it by an overdraft on his nervous endurance. The suggestion that loss of his occupation thwarted his artistic integrity overlooks the implications of these dreams. One cannot dogmatize about what did not happen, but I am morally certain that had Mark Twain continued piloting for another ten years he would have ended in nervous breakdown. If in the full power of young manhood the strain of the work marked him for life, it would have broken him before he was forty.

I do not offer these psychological speculations just to refute Mr Brooks. After Mr DeVoto got through with him, Mr Brooks resembled Jacob Blivens, the Good Little Boy whom nitroglycerine so diffused over five counties that it was necessary to hold five separate inquests to prove that he was dead. I merely want to show that the psychoanalytical method, applied to literature, resembles phrenology and astrology in that by selecting the right symbols you can prove anything you want to. As Mark Twain once said about science, one gets such wholesale returns of conjecture from such a trifling investment of fact. Nevertheless, there is a way of regarding Mark Twain which may fairly be called psychological, but which does not commit us to preconceived theories about him.

Perhaps the wisest remark in all the Centenary publications was Professor Wagenknecht's that, "If Mark Twain was a suppressed genius, he died without ever finding it out." No other American writer has ever appealed so strongly and for so long a time to the

popular mind. And he made this appeal even more by what he was than by what he wrote. The more intimately one follows him into the relations of daily life, the more one realizes that here is an integral personality. Power went out from him; total strangers instinctively recognized a great man. This is a rare experience, as Kipling knew when he said, after his first interview with the author whom he had learned to love and admire fourteen thousand miles away, "Blessed is the man who finds no disillusion when he is brought face to face with a revered writer."

And that same Kipling made Pharaoh Lee say that of all the men he had met, there were only three of whom you knew immediately that they were something *by themselves*. Pharaoh's three were Washington, Talleyrand, and Napoleon. There are three, and I think only three, in American literature—Emerson, Whitman, and Mark Twain. And of the three Mark Twain had the largest and most comprehensive soul. Emerson lived too much in the clouds; Whitman repelled many with his innate crudities and selfishnesses. Some writers are all surface; O. Henry, for instance, seems a hollow shell of a man, with no solid core of character. Too many others put all the best of themselves into their writings, and have nothing left for everyday. But the better one knows Mark Twain the better one likes him. Howells in calling him the Lincoln of our literature was stating simple fact; for Lincoln was a great personality before he was a great statesman. Compare Mark Twain with Lowell, for instance. Lowell, Harvard scholar and New England gentleman, suffered all his life from the condescension of foreigners. As diplomat and man of letters he went about Europe in an agony of self-consciousness, overlooking the fact that condescension requires two people—one to condescend and the other to be condescended to. But you could not condescend to Lincoln, or Emerson, or to Mark Twain.

Now it is impossible for the frustrated or divided personality to produce this integral effect. You can, if you like, lament that Mark Twain did thus and so, and left undone the things which you think he ought to have done, but the fact remains that all his life long he succeeded, by and large, in doing the things he most wanted to do. He expressed himself more fully than most men are able to in an imperfect world. By force of what he was, above and beyond what he wrote, he became the best-loved figure in the literary history of America. If that was frustration, our world needs more of it.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF SANTAYANA[1]

G. S. Brett

GEORGE SANTAYANA attained popular recognition when he became a novelist. Before that time Santayana had been known to a more select audience as a man of letters and a philosopher. To suggest any striking contrast between the earlier and the later work is perhaps a little unfair to the author. As philosopher he was never quite exempt from the accusation of being sensitive about refinements of style and contemptuous about the kind of profundity which a Frenchman or a Spaniard is accustomed to damn with the adjective Teutonic: on the other hand, as a novelist Santayana preserved very definite traces of philosophic caution and described *The Last Puritan* as *A Memoir in the Form of a Novel*. That Santayana's novel should become a best-seller was in no way contrary to the nature of things. In spite of the opinions commonly held, experience has proved more than once that there is still a large class of readers who can appreciate the language of intelligent reflection: for philosophy in its more technical form such readers may have little enthusiasm, but the combination of philosophy and literature achieved by Santayana was abundantly welcomed. The time was obviously approaching when a book on the life and work of Santayana would be useful, and now it has appeared. Mr George W. Howgate has spared no pains to make his volume a complete and adequate account of Santayana's achievement; as a biographical and literary record it has the field to itself, and probably will continue to have it for some time to come.

After the necessary record of Santayana's life, the author divides his book into four parts, discussing the work of Santayana as poet, as moral philosopher, as critic and essayist, as metaphysician. This list of rubrics shows the variety of Santayana's published works and Howgate has treated them all fairly and adequately. As Santayana's books appeared in succession there has been a corresponding flow of reviews and critical articles: the more important contributions to this literature of the subject are listed in the bibliography and various judgments are quoted in the

[1] *George Santayana*, by G. W. Howgate, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1938.

text: notes and references, occupying twenty-seven pages, provide evidence of careful documentation. The last chapter of the text, entitled "Santayana and America," illustrates both the influence which Santayana has had on his contemporaries and the undercurrent of irritation which his attitude toward Americanism has so frequently excited. The famous distinction made by William James, between the tough-minded and the tender-minded, seems peculiarly apt in this context. The conflict in American civilization between the spirit of contemplation and the unreflecting pursuit of material progress was most acute in the years between Santayana's appointment on the staff at Harvard and his final departure from America. In academic circles this conflict took form as the antithesis between Platonism and Pragmatism: on another plane it appeared as antagonism between the Catholic or latin tradition and the Protestant puritanism which, to unsympathetic minds, seemed to progress from tasteless hypocrisy to uncritical self-assertion. There was exaggeration on both sides and more excitement than could be justified by facts; but this did not prevent the growth of the sentiment that Santayana was a hostile critic, nor was the sentiment modified by the elusive subtlety of Santayana's language. Some explanation of this conflict may be found in the facts of Santayana's life, his Spanish origin and the way in which his residence in America began. The details given by Santayana, and reproduced by Howgate, are significant. Santayana's mother was Spanish, but before she married Augustin Santayana she had been married to an American whose birth-place was Boston: it was this connection which led her to leave Madrid in order to educate her family in Boston, though the plan involved separation from her husband. The fact that Santayana in his ninth year "did not know one word of English" suggests that the policy of assimilation or Americanization was inactive at that time. But these explanations are not very convincing: there seems to be no adequate reason why Santayana should not have found Harvard congenial, especially when the rest of America seemed to find difficulty in tolerating Harvard!

Omitting further details of biography, we may pass on to Santayana's intellectual development. In the interval between the B.A. in 1886 and the Ph.D. in 1889 Santayana was in Europe enjoying the benefits of a fellowship. As Professor Perry remarks, "one gets the impression that the department had hatched a

duckling to whose aquatic ways it never became completely accustomed."[2] Santayana was under the nominal direction of William James: his report to his supervisor, written from Berlin in 1887, shows already the definite lines of his development. He declares that he has "tried to become methodical." "I read with notebook in hand, and have one volume destined to contain the pearls of ethical and another the nuts of metaphysical wisdom": he goes on to say that since arriving in Germany he has "become optimistic about the prospects in philosophy": but his point of view has changed and now he considers that philosophy "is an attempt to express a half-undiscovered reality, just as art is, and that two different renderings, if they are expressive, far from cancelling each other add to each other's value": "philosophy seems to me to be its own reward and its justification lies in the delight and dignity of the art itself."

Here are obviously the roots of the tree which was to bear fruits of poetry, philosophy, aesthetics, and literary criticism in equal profusion. The reference to William James recalls the fact that Santayana was one of the great luminaries during the time when Harvard had undisputed precedence in America so far as the humanities were concerned. William James, with effervescent vitality, kept everything in motion and was mainly responsible for the policy which put on the staff in philosophy people who were certain to disagree. James persuaded the Board to appoint Santayana for reasons which are on record: Perry tells us that James had an admiring antipathy to Santayana's philosophy with its "perfection of rottenness and moribund Latinity." James, Royce, Santayana, Münsterberg formed a brilliant society of thinkers always ready to attack one another, yet bound together by that deep loyalty which makes disagreement a sacred duty. James wrote to President Eliot that "Santayana is a very honest and unworldly character, a spectator rather than an actor by temperament": he is "a rare and precious type of which Harvard University may well keep a specimen to enrich her concert withal. We shall always have 'hustlers' enough—but we shall not often have a chance at a Santayana, with his style, his subtlety of perception and his cool-blooded truthfulness." This judgment shows that James was an accurate judge of character: it was echoed afterward by Will

[2]The quotations are from *The Thought and Character of William James*, by R. B. Perry.

Durant when he wrote that America may never have another philosopher like Santayana, because the others will be American.

Santayana's first contribution to literature was the volume *Sonnets and Other Verses* published in 1894. The other volumes of poetry written by Santayana are *Lucifer, a Theological Tragedy* (1899), *A Hermit of Carmel and Other Poems* (1901), and *Poems* (1923). It has been said that Santayana's poetry is "classically compact and severely beautiful," "warmed with the restrained emotionalism of a Spaniard and an aristocrat, and coloured with the peculiar melancholy of an ex-Catholic." This combination of qualities does not seem well adapted to produce great poetry, and it may be safe to predict that if Santayana ultimately enters the ranks of the immortals it will not be on account of his achievements in verse. Philosophy and poetry rarely make a successful marriage. The philosophic partner keeps a cold eye upon the offspring and checks its tendency to soar aloft: the poetic partner may venture into forbidden realms of imagination or enthusiasm, but with a sense of caution and a lack of spontaneity which ends in verbal artistry and leaves the impression that the poem is really an exercise in decorative thinking. With a few eminent exceptions the philosopher-poets demonstrate the truth that their qualities are best shown in their prose works, where the philosophical ideas furnish solid material and the poetical sense chastens the expression.

Santayana expressed his own views on this matter in the book called *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (1900). Poetry, he says, has "a universal and a moral function": . . . "poetry is arrested in its development if it remains an unmeaning play of fancy without relevance to the ideals and purposes of life." The philosophic bias is evident here: there is no place for mere imagery or pure sound, no consideration for lyric outbursts inspired by nothing but exuberance of life. The poetry of which Santayana is talking in this book is something different. He describes Christian doctrine thus: "It was a whole world of poetry descended among men, like the angels at the Nativity, doubling, as it were, their habitation, so that they might move through supernatural realms in the spirit while they walked the earth in the flesh. The consciousness of new loves, new duties, fresh consolations and luminous unutterable hopes accompanied them wherever they went." Here we have the poet Santayana writing about the poem called Christian dogma. A mystical intuition of truth, expressed in words rich in harmony

and suggestion, makes the passage essentially poetic. For poetry of this kind some transcendent element is needed, some contact with the rational order of the Universe or the Divine government of the world. Here we find the explanation of Santayana's provocative judgments on Shakespeare and Browning. Shakespeare's world, he tells us, is only the world of human society: it is the world of the Renaissance, full of variety without unity. Unlike Homer and Dante, Shakespeare has no cosmos, no rational plan of life, no well-ordered hierarchy of values. This estimate of Shakespeare reveals that element in Santayana which made him contemptuous of pragmatism: the world for James was a collection of lots of little things loosely strung together, a place full of logical inconsistencies and all manner of chances, incalculable and therefore exhilarating. Shakespeare and James could both be described in the same words: they were "satisfied with the successive description of various passions and events."

With this introduction we shall find nothing startling in the essay on *The Poetry of Barbarism*. Santayana thinks the world has disintegrated. Literature reflects this condition: "Our poets are things of shreds and patches; they give us episodes and studies, a sketch of this curiosity, a glimpse of that romance: they have no total vision, no grasp of the whole reality." The barbarian, we are told, "is the man who regards his passions as their own excuse for being; who does not domesticate them either by understanding their cause or by conceiving their goal." The actual barbarians selected for consideration are Whitman and Browning. Abundance of detail without organization, wealth of perception without intelligence and of imagination without taste, makes the singularity of Whitman's genius. He attracts a generation which has already lost the sense for discipline. But even so, he was not destined to succeed in his aim. "Incapable of an ideal passion, he was full of the milk of human kindness." But in spite of many good qualities, he failed because he did not truly understand men: he could not become "a poet of the people," because "the people, like the early races whose poetry was ideal, are natural believers in perfection." What about Browning, once the joy of the intellectuals and an inexhaustible mine of quotations suitable for preachers and moralists? Santayana gives him full credit for pithiness of phrase, for "the volume of his passion, the vigour of his moral judgment, the liveliness of his historical fancy." These things are obvious,

but Santayana is not to be side-tracked by the obvious. "What is not so obvious, but no less true, is that we are in the presence of a barbaric genius, of a truncated imagination, of a thought and an art inchoate and ill-digested, of a volcanic eruption that tosses itself quite blindly and ineffectually into the sky." The great fault of Browning is that he never rises into contemplation: he has moral elevation and consequently does not descend to sensualism: but on the other hand "he did not master life but was mastered by it." Vigour, self-confidence, a robust and rather noisy declaration of faith make us overlook the ultimate failure to give a rational interpretation of life.

These essays have been selected for comment because they seem to give a clear view of Santayana's attitude. There is an irresistible tendency to compare it with the similar attitude of Paul Elmer More. Santayana seems to be demanding an inner check, a principle of restraint, a classic sense of form, not unlike that which the new humanists demand. For Santayana and for More there is an element of vulgarity in strong feeling, something repulsive in the sprawling abundance of life, something terrifying in the movement of masses and the surging tide of democracy. Santayana, again like More, justifies himself by a perfection of language: he has a sense for words and he can create sentences that no one would easily or willingly forget. As an example we may quote one passage, large in its sweep and made effective by the subtle suggestion of the last words. "He [Browning] had no idea of anything eternal: so he gave, as he would probably have said, a filling to the empty Christian immortality by making every man busy in it about many things. And to the irrational man, as to the boy, it is no unpleasant idea to have an infinite number of days to live through, an infinite number of dinners to eat, with an infinity of fresh fights and new love-affairs, and no end of last rides together!"

It is not necessary or possible to criticize Santayana's criticisms at this time. Certainly no one would accept them as beyond dispute. William James read the book and wrote to his colleague G. H. Palmer: "The great event in my life recently has been the reading of Santayana's book. Although I absolutely reject the Platonism of it, I have literally squealed with delight at the imperturbable perfection with which the position is laid down on page after page. It is refreshing to see a representative of moribund

Latinity rise up and administer such reproof to us barbarians in the hour of our triumph."

That Santayana's criticism was to some extent emotional and explosive may be learned from his reply to James when he saw this letter. In that reply he says: "You tax me several times with impertinence and superior airs. I wonder if you realize the years of suppressed irritation which I have passed in the midst of an unintelligible, sanctimonious and often disingenuous Protestantism, which is thoroughly alien and repulsive to me, and the need I have of joining hands with something far away from it and far above it. . . . Truly the Babel in which we live has nothing in it so respectable as to put on the defensive the highest traditions of the human mind." Santayana adds that he thinks there is considerable agreement between himself and James, in spite of appearances. There was some truth in this, if we look beyond a decided difference of temperament: both were almost fanatically honest, and it was on this common ground that James wished to persuade Santayana to join him in an attack on what he called "the desiccating and pedantifying" processes of the American Ph.D.

Santayana had been a teacher of philosophy sixteen years when in 1905 he published the first work which belonged definitely to that field. *The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress* was the common title of the five small volumes in which this view of life was presented. It was not a system of philosophy, for Santayana was still contemptuous of systems: he remained contemptuous until 1923, when he began to publish his own system and admitted in the Preface, "Here is one more system!" The Life of Reason is Aristotelian in character, described in so many words as "a contemporary application of Aristotle's thought." The work expounds the place of Reason in Common Sense, in Society, in Religion, in Art, in Science. It is Aristotelian in the sense that it applies certain fundamental principles of judgment to different fields of thought, not insisting on their reduction to a single formula but approaching each subject with the same principles of valuation. As James expressed it, the work has no *rational* foundation, being merely one man's way of viewing things—a combination of naturalism, Platonism, materialism, and atheism. "The book," said James, "is Emerson's first rival and successor, but how different the reader's feeling . . . Emerson receptive, expansive as if handling life through a wide funnel with a great indraught: Santayana as if through a

pin-point orifice that emits his cooling spray outward over the universe like a nose-disinfectant from an atomizer." Santayana apparently resented the comparison with Emerson: he replied, "I am a Latin, and nothing seems serious to me except politics, except the sort of men that your ideas will involve and the sort of happiness they will be capable of. The rest is exquisite moonshine." Religion and idealism Santayana condemns, refusing to "have any share in the conspiracy of mock respect by which intellectual ignominy and moral stagnation are kept up in our society."

In the book called *Character and Opinion in the United States*, Santayana drew a picture of one part of American civilization. His treatment of Royce and James was received with some natural indignation by their respective followers. Whether true or false in fact, these descriptions of his colleagues define Santayana's attitude toward both interpretations of life. Royce was the most prominent teacher of idealism in America: his standpoint was deeply religious and closely allied to Hegelianism. "His was a gothic and scholastic spirit," says Santayana, "intent on devising and solving puzzles and honouring God in systematic works." The case for and against German philosophy is stated again in *The Last Puritan*. The "Papist cousin" Caleb utters a warning: "Don't let the Germans cheat you, my boy. They are greater bluffers at philosophy than any smart Yankee ever was at the game of poker. . . . Yet they are good teachers, because they have the true workman's respect for his tools: they put you through the mill." Santayana regarded both Royce the Hegelian and James the pragmatist as, in his sense of the term, barbarians, though his dislike of their doctrines was quite compatible with sincere friendship. What Santayana disliked was extremes: dogmatism and enthusiasm repelled him. He desired in all things to maintain a critical attitude, letting the searchlight of the intellect play on the variety of life.

II

But time had its revenge. The philosophical critic began to feel more and more the need for a clear formulation of principles. In other words, the seed of philosophy which brought forth for so many years flowers of literature, finally produced fruit. The first period produced *The Life of Reason*, a work which has all the qualities of a mind conscious of principles but contemptuous of

systems. Such a mind, like that of Paul Elmer More, rejects the demon of the Absolute: it clings to the golden mean, cherishes Aristotle, and holds that nothing should be admitted which detracts from the fine art of living. *The Life of Reason* was the monument which Santayana raised to that early ideal of classical perfection. It was published in 1905. But fifteen years later we find Santayana supporting a new school of thought. Idealism in America was never fully domiciled: it came in the baggage of German immigrants and it led an uneasy life, jostled by the Scottish doctrines which suited the Presbyterians, and the sceptical indifference which suited almost everybody. Pragmatism was defined by the Italian Papini as "not so much a philosophy as a way of doing without the other philosophies." As such it seemed to have serious limitations. The outcome was a fresh attempt to meet the demand of the times, known to history as the New Realism. Like most new philosophies, it was essentially very old. Realism had been the word used to denote the Scottish philosophy which flourished before German thought arrived in America. It could equally well be regarded as a suitable term to describe the type of philosophy derived from Aristotle and sustained by the Roman Catholic tradition from Thomas Aquinas to the present day. That Santayana should join the ranks of the Realists was therefore not paradoxical. The process was made more simple by the fact that the group of six who issued the first declaration of principles was rather loosely connected and the programme left plenty of room for the disagreements which in fact soon became apparent. The articles of faith which attracted Santayana, we may easily discover.

First, there was the reaction from German idealism. The reputation of this school suffered from the emotions excited by the War of 1914-18, and Santayana had been inspired by it to write a book on *Egotism in German Philosophy* (1916). Philosophers should not allow themselves to be swayed by current events, but in Santayana's case the events only served to make him more sure that a philosophy which put all the emphasis on ideas was a gross exaggeration: it was egotism carried beyond the limits of sanity. The Greek principle was "nothing too much," and to this we must return. Accordingly Santayana announces one point of his programme: "In natural philosophy I am a decided materialist—apparently the only one living." Santayana, then, believes that matter is something independently real and may be something

much more wonderful, much more mysterious than we think. As the human mind seems to be a function of the body, as organized matter seems capable of unpredictable powers, we have no right to ignore it or talk as if mind was the only thing of real importance. This sounds like a return to the standpoint of primitive man who accepts the external world without criticism. But Santayana is more subtle than that: he has read philosophers and he has had the experience which comes from meditating on the inescapable problems of reflective thinking. The beginning of wisdom is scepticism: the mind must be stripped of its prejudices and assumptions if it is ever to attain truth. So it appears that after all we cannot pretend to know anything except the experiences we actually have: we see colours and hear sounds, but we cannot know what these things are in the realm of matter. Scepticism is criticism and when the critical faculty asks honestly what do we actually know about the world in which we seem to live, the honest answer is "nothing." How, then, did we get started and why is there anything to be sceptical about? The answer is that man is not simply a rational being, nor merely a collection of ideas: deeper than this play of thought there is something inarticulate, some raw material of experience which we are accepting even in our most searching criticism. This is animal faith, and the first volume in Santayana's constructive philosophy is therefore called *Scepticism and Animal Faith*. Santayana's materialism, then, is not at all crude and not very much like materialism as usually understood. He will allow neither matter nor mind to be the only thing in the Universe: both have their rights and they must be equally respected. In a similar fashion his atheism is a very diluted variety: he believes there is nothing immortal: he regards religion as the work of imagination. But he seems to be most concerned to deny that religion gains anything by relying on unintelligible mysteries and hoary superstitions. That way lies dishonesty. On the other hand, if theological dogmas and controversies were abandoned, we should still have left piety and that cosmic poetry which is the essence of true religion.

So in 1920 Santayana was committed to a definite school of philosophy and apparently felt the obligation to work out his theory. The books, entitled respectively *The Realm of Essence* (1928), *The Realm of Matter* (1930), *The Realm of Truth* (1937), followed in stately procession and presumably give us the whole expansion

of this philosophy. We shall not attempt to elaborate the arguments of these books. Santayana presents a difficulty to the mind of the academic philosopher: he is systematically unsystematic, and so far addicted to the aesthetic pleasure of fine writing that it is easy to miss the deeper meaning of the sentences. Success has attended Santayana as a literary man: consequently his philosophy has been regarded as secondary and too much overlooked, which is not fair to its author. We like a writer to follow a consistent line, because we can then assign him a label and attack his position. We do not feel so comfortable in dealing with a man like Santayana. Just when we are ready to assault the materialism, we find ourselves reading a book like *Platonism and the Spiritual Life*. Knowing that Santayana talks about the spirit and essences, we assume that he is a Platonist, only to find that Plato is criticized for not knowing these things. The great masters of the spiritual life, says Santayana, are evidently not the Greeks, not even the Alexandrian Greeks, but the Indians, because "they have surrendered that early, unregenerate claim to be enveloped in a protecting world designed for their benefit or vindication, a claim of which Platonism after all was but a refined version." Elsewhere, he says, "in Platonism, as in Christianity, the spiritual life is not pure, but incarnate in a particular body of doctrine, historical and cosmological." The interests which Plato's doctrine expressed and sanctioned were respectable interests, political, moral, emotional. Like all typical Greeks, the Platonists shuddered at the infinite: "this is of itself a sufficient proof that they were fundamentally political philosophers, moralists, humanists and not men living primarily in the spirit." Going still further, Santayana says that "the Greeks were not aesthetes: their love of form and their approach to perfection in it were not aesthetic but moral, political, hygienic: like noble animals they were proud and content in their own bodies, faculties and loves." Platonism is moralistic: it will love in man and in nature so much as conforms to the patterns which its mathematical physics, its zoology, and its political idealism prescribe for things: all that deviates from these norms will seem to it sad, unaccountable, terrible, and dangerous. "In fact, the love of nature and of man, though the beauty of order and harmony in both was still felt in the Greek manner, does not seem to me conspicuous in Platonism. It was a censorious, puritan, prescriptive love: it was not spontaneous, it was not sympathetic, it was

not love of nature at all, but of a political human good." So Platonism seems to be a failure because it was intoxicated with love of fair forms and sanctified customs. The life of the spirit, says Santayana, is just not that: it must be "disintoxicated," disillusioned: the spirit must free itself from the limitations of time, place, and custom. Then it becomes truly free, truly universal, and contemplates all forms of life without prejudice, preference, or even interest. In another work Santayana describes the spiritual man as "resigning existence itself as gladly as he accepts it, or even more gladly: because the emphasis which action and passion lend to the passing moment seems to him arbitrary and violent." One critic comments on this passage by saying: "This conclusion is neither religious nor tragical: it is the onlooker yawning a little at the game!"

In all Santayana's thought there is a persistent demand for harmony with the attitude of common sense. The world in which we live is fundamentally a flux of events: we dream our dreams, think our thoughts and make our plans, but all the time there is a reality which must be faced, a need for action which by its very nature must take account of a world which lies beyond our will or desire. The idealist may assert the importance of mind but he must not confuse things and ideas. Because he inclines to do this, or at least Santayana was convinced the Germans did so, it is necessary to reduce the mind to its proper sphere. This vein of common sense runs through the English tradition. It is most conspicuous in Locke, and for this reason Santayana, overlooking many faults, gives him high praise. Locke constructed "no metaphysical castle, no theological acropolis: rather a homely ancestral manor-house built in several styles of architecture: a Tudor chapel, a Palladian front toward the new geometrical garden, a Jacobean parlour for political consultation and even—since we are almost in the eighteenth century—a Chinese cabinet full of curios." For Santayana, Locke was "the William James of the seventeenth century." Their common qualities were eternal freshness of conviction and ardour for reform: distrust of tradition, of words, of constructive argument: horror of vested interests and of their smooth defenders.

To say that a philosopher shows "distrust of constructive argument" might seem to be far removed from praise. But the word constructive as here used points to those makers of systems who

attempt to reduce the variety of experience to one formula, insisting that all is mind or all is matter. Though this may be the practice of some philosophers there are others who do not think this is their proper business: they prefer to accept things as they find them and admit that life cannot be reduced entirely to the forms of logic. The true business of the philosopher, then, becomes the task of describing faithfully the characteristics of experience. This was the purpose which started Locke on his investigation of the human understanding and, however defective the result may be, his work defines the method.

The educational tradition of the North American continent perpetuated the teaching of Locke until it was partly superseded by that of Sir William Hamilton. The intrusion of German idealism was challenged first by the adherents of the Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid, and then by William James whose radical empiricism was essentially a return to Locke. In the light of these historical facts the philosophy of Santayana is not difficult to explain. Idealism of the German type is definitely rejected. The standpoint of realism is accepted but modified by admitting that experience must be critically examined: there is a "realm of matter," but this is not to be taken at its face value; it is the function of science to tell us what we ought to think about it, and we must think about it because our survival depends on having true ideas about things and their relations. At this level the influence of Herbert Spencer and William James is clear. Santayana himself acknowledges a debt to Herbert Spencer and accepts from him the view that matter in itself is unknowable, that our real concern is with the relations between objects (including our own bodies), and that the root of science is biological necessity. William James had also been influenced by Spencer, and one of the strands woven into Pragmatism is the fundamental hypothesis laid down by Spencer, that life is worth living. This is not a judgment elaborated by reason. It is an attitude natural to the organism, a primary instinct, from which begins the desire to explore the world, to find good, to secure shelter, and, in the higher reaches of science, foresee the course of events. The realm of matter is thus conceived as the whole realm of biological activity, the "adjustment of inner relations to outer relations" in the language of Spencer. Truth is for Santayana simply "the standard comprehensive description of any fact in all its relations." There is no "problem of truth" except the problem

of an adequate technique, and no "ultimate truth" because science continually revises the standard description and there is no known limit to progress.

This interpretation of experience so far involves nothing difficult to comprehend, neither have we advanced beyond the limits of natural science. But there are other realms to be considered. We admit in daily language that the animal is higher than the plant, man higher than the other animals. What is the mark of this superiority? Along with the changing structure which is the evolution of the organism, there goes evolution or emergence of mind. Mind may not be distinguishable from matter; both mind and matter may be united in the conception of the organism and its behaviour: but there remains still, within the limits of that experience we are describing, the act of contemplation which is the spirit. To express the meaning of this word "spirit" taxes even the ingenuity of Santayana: we use the word often in many ways but rarely attempt to define it: though generally akin to intelligence it is not identical with it, for intelligence is directed to practical ends: spirit is "an impartial readiness to know," "the actual light of consciousness falling upon anything." Howgate finds echoes of the doctrine of Santayana in Robert Bridges, "one of Santayana's most intimate friends in England." He quotes from *The Testament of Beauty* several passages, of which this one may be taken as a sample:

> How the mind of man from inconscient existence
> cometh thr' the animal by growth of reasoning
> to'ard spiritual conscience.

Perhaps poets, artists, and some philosophers are the only persons competent to grasp the idea of spirit, for it involves a detachment from logical and practical issues which few can attain.

III

In spite of its length this review-article must leave untouched many topics included in Howgate's book, such as the contribution of Santayana to aesthetics, and his numerous essays. We must also refrain from any attempt to express an independent critical judgment. To say anything new or significant would be difficult, for Santayana anticipated the more obvious comments by including among his *Later Soliloquies* the essay on "My Friendly Critics."

Here we find a supplement to the ideas already expressed. Santayana admits his "atheism," but claims that it is true piety; he admits "detachment" from things and persons, but asserts that this is affectionate; he claims that all artists are conceited, so that his own conceits are not unusual or improper. Moral philosophy Santayana calls his "chosen subject," meaning by "moral" the characteristics of men and their vital problems. But even here he finds misunderstanding: he calls himself "a friend of publicans and sinners," not because he hopes to reform them but because he "likes them as they are." In this sense he is a pagan, content with the fulness and variety of life: yet even his friends find his moral philosophy "negative and narrow, a philosophy of abstention and distaste for life." "My critics are the first to tell me that my sort of happiness is a poor thing in their estimation," says Santayana: but this is unimportant because the last thing Santayana proposes to do is to set up an ideal for someone else. One virtue is generally conceded to Santayana: "to find the comparatively right word" is his art. This may be the one indisputable excellence to which Santayana can lay claim: but modesty must not be allowed to obscure the other merits. Although Santayana tends to the refined and the exquisite in his own pursuits, he has a full appreciation of life as it is really lived. In the well-known and much-praised essay on Dickens there is a comparison of Dickens with Walt Whitman. "Whitman had a sort of transcendental philosophy which swallowed the universe whole; . . . he could never see the trees for the wood and remained incapable, for all his diffuse love of the human herd, of even painting a character or telling a story": Dickens, who had no transcendental philosophy, could understand men and make each individual character an eternal and universal type. This is a good example of Santayana's insight: he does not turn away from simple things as unworthy of attention but rather applauds the man who can give them their proper recognition. Dickens shows us "the ruddy glow of the hearth: the sparkle of glasses and brasses and well-scrubbed pewter; the savoury fumes of the hot-punch, after the tingle of the wintry air: the coaching scenes, the motley figures and absurd incidents of travel; the changing sights and joys of the road"—and so on.

Whatever Santayana touches he adorns. Must we then recall the judgment of William James and say that Santayana is a spectator rather than an actor? In one sense the judgment is

true—but not if it implies contempt of the spectator, nor if it suggests that a spectator is not also in his way an actor. The world needs ideas as well as actions; it has a place for the regulative as well as the impulsive forces. Santayana is consciously aristocratic but refuses to be autocratic. In many places and in many contexts he expresses his dislike of dogmatism, his desire to let things grow in their own way, his reluctance to use persuasion where inclination fails. Inevitably this refusal to be aggressive produces an impression of indifference, and Santayana is fully aware that it is only the initiated who can be expected to appreciate him. But he has certainly not been discouraged; and if his literary work has had to defray the expenses of his more profound meditations, that is no uncommon fate. In one of his works Santayana declares that absolute truth is not only unattainable but actually incompatible with being alive. It is not the function of mind to attain anything so transcendent as complete knowledge or eternal and immutable truth. "The real function of the mind is to increase the wealth of the world in its spiritual dimension." This is the creed of Santayana's faith and to that creed we may say he has been consistently true. He has lived in an intellectual sphere, taking for granted the material support on which it rests, looking from a height on the confusion of the market-place, illuminating with clear light both thought and action, and teaching by example the worth of ideals. Whether a man's achievement belongs to technical invention, scientific theory, literature, or philosophy, is a matter of secondary importance. Santayana has uttered his verdict on the ultimate value of all our conscious striving and it may be said of him, in his own words, that he has "increased the wealth of the world in its spiritual dimension."

RACINE: 1639–1699

A. F. B. Clark

EVERYONE knows the story of the English school-boy who, on a tour of Italy with his tutor, showed a disconcerting apathy before the great historical monuments, until it was announced that the next day they would visit the tomb of Virgil. To the tutor's surprise and joy the boy's eyes shone with enthusiasm. But the tutorial joy was dashed when, on arrival at the tomb, the boy spat upon it with gusto, exclaiming, "I've waited a long time to get even with that fellow."

I am afraid that a visit of school-boys—possibly even French ones—to the tomb of Racine might result in mass expectorations. If there is one great figure in literature whom professorial ineptitude has succeeded in transforming into a monument of *ennui*, it is Racine. I recall the impression I acquired of the French dramatist in my student-days (and which I was long in throwing off)—the image of a curious, pedantic man who had contrived an ingenious sort of dramatic "space-time continuum" whose main beauty was that it obeyed a great number of "rules"—decorum, verisimilitude, *liaison des scènes*, absence of physical action, and, above all—oh, joy!—"the three unities." These latter constituted the very soul of this singular abstraction, though, if you looked carefully, you might perceive, enmeshed in its mechanism, a number of puppets representing "types" gesturing verbosely at each other. In other words, rules, rhetoric, convention; no spontaneity, no variety, no realism, no life.

Perhaps the responsibility for this fantastic English view of French tragedy is to be traced back to Neander's triumphant cry in Dryden's *Essay of Dramatic Poesy:* "Now what, I beseech you, is more easy than to write a regular French play, or more difficult than to write an irregular English one, like those of Fletcher or of Shakespeare?" You see—already you have French tragedy presented as a mere mechanism, which, as it were, writes itself, while English drama is always an individual creation without precedents or guiding rules. More important still is the introduction of the Shakespeare-parallel. When Racine's name is mentioned henceforth, the critical parrots have only to scream "Shakespeare" and

down goes Racine. Only in the eighteenth century, when Shakespeare's effulgence is a little veiled, will "exact Racine" enjoy a certain wan reputation in England. Romanticism demolishes this frail structure completely. Matthew Arnold, who re-established the prestige of French culture in England, stressed the importance of French thought and French prose; French poetry and French drama left him cold. To Meredith, Molière was the all-sufficient symbol of the French genius. Swinburne, Wilde, Symons, Moore, and the other Francophiles of the later nineteenth century could not see beyond Hugo, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Verlaine, etc. Scholar-critics like Saintsbury and Gosse, though they widened the French horizon of the English mind considerably, never brought Racine into proper focus.*

It is pretty generally admitted that the first English critic to "get inside" Racine was Lytton Strachey. The pages devoted to the French dramatist in this writer's *Landmarks of French Literature* (1912) have themselves become a "landmark" in English appreciation of Racine. But they had been preceded (in 1908) by a more detailed study which was republished in *Books and Characters* (1922). Maurice Baring made appreciative references to Racine in several places, and in 1921 Professor F. Y. Eccles, in his Taylorian lecture *Racine in England*, reviewed the dramatist's scanty fortunes in Great Britain and added some penetrating comments on the causes of this scantiness. In 1925 appeared Mme Duclaux's *Life of Racine*, the first serious attempt at a biography of the poet in English, sound in its appreciation of his plays, but none too secure in its scholarship. Since then two or three English and American scholars have contributed some useful and sympathetic pages of Racinian appreciation, but there still exists no tribute to the genius of Racine, adequate both in scope and quality, in the English language.

But it would be wrong to suppose that Racine's path has been roses, roses all the way even in his own country. The deadly

*It should be added here that an error in approaching Racine, almost as harmful as the Shakespeare-parallel, has been the habit of regarding him as an imitator of Greek drama. There is no possibility of progress in the understanding of Racine until this bad habit of measuring him by standards derived from alien conceptions and schools of the drama is abandoned once and for all, and the rights of French classical tragedy to autonomous existence on an equality with Greek, Elizabethan, and Spanish drama are fully and unreservedly recognized.

Shakespeare-parallel began its work in France too, even in the eighteenth century; the dread that it might work havoc with the reputation of his beloved Racine is at the bottom of Voltaire's furious belittlement, in his later years, of the English dramatist whom he had been the first to force on the notice of the French people. In the heart of the Romantic movement Racine's fortunes were at a low ebb; Corneille fared much better. Only the histrionic genius of Rachel kept his plays before the French public during the second third of the century; Hugo, while sometimes praising him as a poet, always denied him (as Corneille had done) the gifts of a dramatist; Sainte-Beuve, though there are many passages on Racine in his vast corpus of criticism, never writes in a tone of real enthusiasm, and everyone knows the famous *locus* in *Port-Royal* where he "damns with faint praise": "Racine représente la perfection du style poétique, même pour ceux qui n'aiment pas essentiellement la poésie."

Yet from Romanticism itself sprang that new historical sense, that capacity for viewing the art of other ages with the eyes of those ages themselves, which was destined to redress the very injustices of Romanticism. That is why the first step in the rehabilitation of Racine was the famous essay which Taine devoted to him in 1858. Taine, pursuing his well-known theme of the *milieu* which explains the writer, made it his business to show that Racine's plays, far from being imitations of Greek tragedy, are expressions of the society of the age of Louis XIV. But Taine made two errors: he identified that society too closely with the mere court circles of Versailles, and thereby neglected other very different elements which went to make the "society" of seventeenth-century France; and, by his exaggerated stress on the purely *historical* and, as it were, *documentary* value of Racine's plays as expressions of a given age, he slighted that universal human significance which underlies their local and temporal traits and which it is necessary to bring out if they are to be for modern men anything but museum-pieces.

It was left for a distinguished group of actors and critics of the Third Republic to perform this last act in the unveiling of the real Racine. They were no doubt aided by that violent reaction against Romanticism which took the double form of realism on the one side and a sort of revived but modified classicism, on the other. Even a slight nationalistic tendency, in the wake of the disaster

of 1870, to rediscover the "essential French values" played some part, I think, in this revaluation. But it is hard to imagine that Racine's return to favour would have made the progress it did without the appearance, in the seventies and the eighties, of at least three actors who seemed designed by nature, physically and spiritually, to reveal the inner meaning of Racine's personages. I am thinking of M. Mounet-Sully, Mme Sarah Bernhardt, and Mme Bartet. It will be a long time before the French stage sees another Orestes like Mounet-Sully, a Phèdre like Bernhardt, or an Andromaque like Bartet. Their influence extended from the first years of the Third Republic right up to the Great War, and was seconded throughout exactly the same period by a brilliant quartet of literary and dramatic critics—Sarcey, Faguet, Brunetière, and Lemaître—all of whom showed a remarkable power of penetrating into the very soul of Racine's plays. Finally, at the very beginning of this period, appeared the great, standard edition of Racine's works by Paul Mesnard, in which not only did Racine's plays appear for the first time in a setting of proper historical and literary commentary, but a scholarly biography of the poet at last replaced the insufficient memoirs of his father by Louis Racine. It is a feature of the latest phase of Racinian scholarship that it finds its interest at least as much in the attempt to elucidate the poet's enigmatic life and personality as in the interpretation of his plays.

And now, what of the figure—as man and artist—that emerges from three hundred years of adulation and contumely, misrepresentation, favourable and unfavourable, to celebrate the tercentenary of his birth? Is it the "real Racine"? Or will 2039 (if it is celebrating the anniversaries of geniuses) have a "new Racine"? At all events it is "our Racine." He is certainly not the Racine of 1739 nor yet that of 1839. The Racine of 1739 was the unapproachable exemplar of tragic drama, past, present, and future, a model not merely for France but for all Europe; the name of Shakespeare, as a possible rival, was still only being surreptitiously whispered abroad. The Racine of 1839 (the twilight of the classical gods of literature) was a statue fallen from its pedestal, a discredited *perruque*. The Racine of 1939 has (to quote one of his own lines) "ni cet excès d'honneur ni cette indignité." A better understanding of Racine has gone *pari passu* with a broader grasp of the civilization of the Age of Louis XIV. The Palace of Versailles with its worldliness, its formal elegance and baroque pomp, still stands in the popular mind as the all-sufficient symbol of the higher life of

France in the seventeenth century. Racine, as the favourite of Louis among the men of letters of the time, has been too easily assumed to be the instrument of expression *par excellence* of this Versailles culture. On one side of his nature—and of his art—he is such an instrument, and it is the side most obvious to the inattentive reader. But Racine had contacts with other than the Versailles side of French seventeenth-century life—had, indeed, more violently contrasting contacts than any other of the great men of letters of the time—and these, too, go to the making of his plays.

When one studies with some care the France of the seventeenth century, one comes to realize that, far from being characterized by a monotonous and shallow elegance, it equalled, if it did not excel, "the spacious times of great Elizabeth" in full-blooded variety and dynamic contrasts. *Politesse* is only one of its aspects, though the one most publicized. Alongside this formal France dwelt a deeper and more passionate France. Both the spiritual ardours of the Middle Ages and the sensual ferocities of the Renaissance still blossomed there into flowers of purity and evil. The "Affaire des Poisons"—the great scandal of Louis' reign—revealed a Parisian underworld of witchcraft and crime, of lust and cruelty in which some of the greatest names in French society were implicated. On the other hand, France was never "the elder daughter of the Church" in a more profound sense than she was in the seventeenth century. Her religion was not yet the humanitarian deism of the eighteenth century—it was the pure, ardent otherworldliness of the Middle Ages rising to its last, intense ecstasy after the long trials of the Wars of Religion. Holy men like Saint François de Sales and Saint Vincent de Paul, preachers like Bossuet and Bourdaloue, mystics like Pascal—these are figures as characteristic of seventeenth-century France as Descartes or Molière. Above all, France produced in that age one of the most singular of religious sects, the Jansenists—singular for the monk-like simplicity of their lives, the Calvinistic "dourness" of their view of life, their tenacity in holding to their beliefs, and their humility and courage under persecution.

Now, we know that Racine was born into a Jansenist family, that he spent several years in the Jansenist school at Port-Royal and that this austere teaching entered so deeply into his soul that it survived triumphant all the assaults of the world, the flesh, and the devil. Yet we know also that Racine was temperamentally

exposed to these terrible assaults. On leaving the chaste precincts of Port-Royal, he becomes involved with the gay, Bohemian society of men of letters and actors in Paris; his aunt Agnes (a *religieuse* at Port-Royal) upbraids him in letters with the evil company he is keeping; and presently he becomes the lover, first of Mlle Du Parc, then of Mlle Champmeslé, two celebrated actresses, neither of whom was a model of Jansenist virtue. La Du Parc was an intimate of the vile La Voisin—the leading criminal in the "affaire des Poisons"—who even dragged Racine's name into the evidence given during her trial; thus Racine at least brushed shoulders, however lightly, with *milieux* where he had every opportunity to observe and hear about the life of abandoned passion and crime. As for Mlle Champmeslé, Racine was one of a septet of lovers who entertained her and her *mari complaisant* at fraternal little *diableries* where the champagne (paid for by Racine, the "severe Boileau" informs us) flowed freely. The nursling of Port-Royal was sorely in need of the ministrations of his guardian angel—who duly arrived, and lo! the "conversion" at the very height of Racine's fame as a dramatist. The causes and the essential nature of this "conversion" of Racine are still a matter for controversy, but the effects are clear and drastic. Racine ceased, not only writing for the theatre, but even attending the theatre; he dropped all his actor and actress friends, he became reconciled to Port-Royal with which he had quarrelled violently, he married a simple woman who had never read a line of his plays, and he entered upon a life of domestic simplicity and profound piety, in which he persisted until the end of his life more than twenty years later, keeping up, at the same time, however, his attendance at court as the favourite and (now) the official historiographer of Louis XIV.

I have given these glimpses into Racine's biography because they suggest an experience of sexual passion rather different from that of most writers of the seventeenth century, and may explain the source of his peculiar contribution to literature. A life of dissipation was common among the "libertines" of the time, but they took the experiences of the flesh for granted, as a perfectly natural and proper gratification of "nature." Gallantry was not only common but was, one might say, *de rigueur* at court; but it was gallantry and nothing more. But Racine was a man on whom Port-Royal had laid its spell in early youth; struggle as he might, he could never throw off this incubus of chastity; his "nature"

was passionate and voluptuous, but never could he regard this "nature" as anything but evil; and so he came to objectify his experience of love, to see it as something apart from his true self, to regard it as a strange and terrible thing, a thing not to be taken for granted but to be studied, a curse, a malady, a visitation, and finally to conceive a violent revulsion from it.

At all events it was Racine who introduced what we may call the tragic aspect of love into literature, where it has flourished to the present day. Love in literature before Racine had been mainly either of the *idealistic* variety (associated with medieval theories of chivalry and honour) as in Corneille's *Le Cid*, or of the *romantic* variety (as in Shakespeare's youthful lovers), or else—as in the literature which preceded and surrounded Racine—it was that queer, artificial product known as "gallantry." True, *amour-passion* had been occasionally studied, as by Shakespeare in *Antony and Cleopatra* and in *Measure for Measure*. But there can be no doubt that it was Racine who, by making it the *leit-motiv* in all his profane tragedies, and by analysing it with a psychological insight and delicacy never approached before (except incidentally by Shakespeare), imposed it as *the* subject for modern literature, though his influence reveals itself rather in prose fiction than in the post-Racinian drama. In this anniversary year, then, let us realize that it is not "gallantry" but the tragedy of love, *amour-passion*, that is the heart of Racine's drama.

But what about the vehicle which was to convey the new subject-matter? Modern pioneers in psychological investigation through the medium of literature are also usually pioneers in form. If Racine had anticipated them in this point also, no one could have mistaken his originality. But Racine found what he considered an ideal vehicle ready made to his hand, French classical tragedy as it had been shaped by Corneille. Indeed, this form of theatre in Racine's youth might be described as a drama in search of a dramatist. It had, as we have said, been invented by Corneille, but it had never made an ideal mould for its inventor's ideas. After four or five brilliant plays in which Corneille's fresh, youthful vigour carried all obstacles before it, the maladjustment between content and form became increasingly evident, leading to Corneille's temporary retirement after *Pertharite*. What was the essence of this form of drama called French classical tragedy, in which its founder, Corneille, felt himself so straitened, and his follower, Racine, moved with such sovereign ease?

The essence of French tragedy is *not* observation of the rules and the proprieties, nor the three unities, nor absence of physical action, nor rhetoric. Its essence is that it is the study of a sudden, brief, psychological crisis. It is not a lyrico-religious ceremony like Greek tragedy, nor a panoramic epic in dialogue like Elizabethan drama, nor, above all, a static recitative like the older French tragedy of the Renaissance (though it bears traces of this ancestry); it is a drama of intense and unflagging action—*only this action is psychological, not physical.* It has been sometimes defined as a psychological problem put into action. Its movement does not depend on external agencies; it generates its own plot out of the acts of passion and volition of its characters. It does not concern itself with a multiplicity of characters with marked idiosyncrasies (humours, as the Elizabethans used to say) studied in leisurely fashion in the round, as they present now this, now that facet of their individuality to the light of events; it concentrates on the cross-play of psychological lightning between a small number of persons caught in the grip of a rapidly maturing catastrophe, and character interests it only in so far as it reveals itself in these blinding flashes. French tragedy thus specializes, not so much in the study of individual character as in that of human types and how they react to certain stimuli from each other. We see Hamlet not only as the avenger of his father but as the lover of Ophelia and the critic of the drama; we see Phèdre and Hermione only as "women in love." What French tragedy loses thereby in individualization, it gains in universality.

It was soon discovered that this type of drama gained enormously in effectiveness the more concentrated and simplified it became in structure. And that is where, at last, the famous rules do take on some significance. They were not arbitrarily imposed on French dramatists from above or outside; they were gradually adopted by them because they were seen to help them to make their particular variety of drama more effective. The essence of this new psychological drama is intensity, as that of Elizabethan drama is breadth. How much the intensity increases as you strip the drama of all its adipose tissue and reduce it to an athletic leanness of nerve and muscle! Hence the rules of unity of action, barring redundancy of plot, of unity of place, barring dispersion in space, and of unity of time, forcing the solution of the crisis into a few hours, and above all, one should add, of the unformulated unity of tone, barring comic relief and vulgar realism from tragedy

—all these rules only help French tragedy to remain faithful to its instinct for concentration and intensity. Elizabethan tragedy might be compared to a richly ornamented Juggernaut that has to stop constantly for traffic-signals, French tragedy to a non-stop streamlined express for which the tracks have to be cleared ahead. That is why it appealed to Addison, who objected to English tragi-comedy that "it breaks the tide of the passions while they are yet flowing"; the whole effort of French tragedy strains towards the avoidance of such interruption. Now what is this but the ideal of the "well-made" play of Scribe, Augier, Sardou, Ibsen, Pinero, in the nineteenth century? The fact—seldom recognized—is that French classical tragedy by its neatness and economy of structure is the distant progenitor of the most effective forms of nineteenth-century drama.

Why did this form of drama which he invented prove not quite congenial to Corneille? Because the psychological content which he poured into it tended to burst the mould. Corneille was a sort of Nietzschean *avant la lettre*; he was interested only in supermen, in beings of indomitable will-power. Now it is difficult for supermen to spin an endless series of dramatic situations out of their own hearts; they conquer their weaknesses too easily; it becomes necessary for the dramatist to confront them with more and more difficult external situations which he artificially creates himself; and so Corneille's drama tended to become more and more complex and artificial and ultimately to revert to that dependence on external accidents and agencies (mistaken identities, recognitions, letters from dead men) which it had started by eliminating. Racine's vision of man, on the other hand, as the victim of passion and crime, against which he struggles but in vain, especially his addiction to the study of *amour-passion* found this psychological drama a very gift from the gods. His passion-tost characters are veritable self-generators of complex and ever-varying psychological situations which furnish, without any help from external accident, the warp and woof of a close-knit plot.

Racine therefore came to the rescue of the "well-made" drama of unified and concentrated psychological action when it was in dire distress, filled it with its proper content and saved its tradition for its evolution into more modern forms. He would only have had to take a step or two more—to reject verse for prose (as some experimenters of the time tried to do) or, without going so far, to adopt more of the tone of colloquial speech as La Fontaine and,

in some measure, Molière did, and to abandon the rhetorical monologues—to make himself seem a very modern dramatist indeed. But Racine was a practical man and a favourite of Louis XIV. He sacrificed to some extent to the taste of his age for gallantry, swelling rhetoric, and suave periphrasis. Above all, he admitted into his plays an unfortunately large amount of that stylistic bane, the "jargon of gallantry." These are the things which catch the eye of the inattentive reader. Racine tends to relapse into them when his creative ardour is at something below white heat; but when he is really living through his characters' experiences with them, he achieves a combination of colloquial realism with poetic dignity in language that is the distinguishing mark of his personal style. Some of his most famous dramatic phrases (incomprehensible out of their context), like Hermione's "Qui te l'a dit?" or Roxane's "Sortez!" are, indeed, pure colloquialism. As Sainte-Beuve pointed out, his poetic style just grazes the borders of prose, though it seldom topples over into it; nothing less like the metaphorical splendour of the Elizabethans can be imagined; what transforms the prose into poetry here is something more subtle, an incomparable instinct for the use of the musical accent of the French language as a means of heightening the emotional effect. Lines like these of Bérénice—

> Pour jamais! Ah! Seigneur, songez-vous en vous-même
> Combien ce mot cruel est affreux quand on aime?
> Dans un mois, dans un an, comment souffrirons-nous
> Seigneur, que tant de mers me séparent de vous?
> Que le jour recommence et que le jour finisse,
> Sans que jamais Titus puisse voir Bérénice,
> Sans que de tout le jour je puisse voir Titus?—

are really more characteristic of Racine than the occasional vivid image like Phèdre's

> C'est Venus tout entière à sa proie attachée.

As for the long monologues (much less frequent than in Corneille, it should be noted), it must be confessed that they often are exercises in rhetoric; however, in the mouths of important characters they are never that, but rather firmly-knit pieces of self-analysis (have not modern novelists like Dostoïevsky and Joyce made the monologue a main instrument for psychological revelation?).

A more detailed appreciation of Racine's achievement as the psychologist of *amour-passion* expressed through the medium of the "well-made" play is out of the question here. Suffice it to

say that, relatively narrow though his range of human interests may be, Racine is now recognized as not inferior to Shakespeare himself in the masterly depiction of passionate love and especially of the furies of jealousy. In fact, Shakespeare himself can offer nothing to match such a gallery of finely differentiated portraits of one master-passion in diverse personalities as those of Racine's *grandes amoureuses*—Hermione, Bérénice, Roxane, and Phèdre. As to his later avatar as the dramatist of "sacred love," space forbids discussion of it here.

But, before closing, I should like for a moment to direct attention to an entirely different aspect of Racine. Modern aesthetics has made us familiar with the division of creative artistic activity into two channels, art as representation of nature and art as "pure form," pattern, or rhythm. Modern artists—novelists, poets, dramatists, painters, sculptors, musicians—have shown a tendency to specialize in one of these channels and to display a certain scorn for that aspect of art which they have rejected. In the middle of the last century the great Russian novelists grew up in an atmosphere hostile to niceties of structure and style and insistent on literature being a faithful reproduction of real life. In France and England, on the other hand, the "art for art's sake" school, starting with Gautier and culminating with the Parnassians and Walter Pater, put "formal beauty" far above meaning and interpretation of life. We know to what extremes art as "pure form" has gone in our own day, in writers like Gertrude Stein, in painters like Braque, in musicians like the later Schoenberg. Occasionally, the same artist appears alternately as "expressionist" and "abstractionist," as in the case of Joyce, Picasso, and Stravinsky. Only very rarely, as in the case of Pushkin and of Flaubert, are "representation" and "pure art" found in perfect equilibrium—and then only in the case of a very few works.

Racine is one of these rare cases. I have spoken of him up to the present as the discoverer—or the exploiter—of a whole province of human nature. He was indeed a psychological pioneer. Now such pioneers—like Stendhal, Dostoïevsky, Emily Brontë—are particularly inclined, both because of their enthusiasm over their discoveries and in view of the recalcitrant material they have to deal with, to be neglectful of and scornful of "pure art." Not so Racine. To be sure the vehicle he had taken over from Corneille is in itself an incitement to the artist's instinct to create patterns and rhythms. It lends itself more than any other kind of drama

to being moulded into the beauty of pure form, of what the French call *le galbe*, the sweeping curve of an exquisitely-shaped vase, the symmetrical balance of a perfectly composed picture, or, above all, the intricate unity of a well-constructed piece of music. But the essentially inartistic, though vigorous and imaginative, genius of Corneille had not exploited this side of his own creation. Racine is at least as much the pure artist as he is the psychologist, and his delight in "pure art" penetrates not only each of his dramas as a whole but each one of their details. Their "musical" structure, with their contrasted character-themes (the passionate shrillness of Hermione over against the gentle serenity of Andromaque, the virtue of Burrhus over against the villainy of Narcisse, the divine ardour of Joad over against the impiety of Athalie), their alternation of violent *fortissimi* with pathetic *pianissimi* (as everywhere in *Andromaque* and *Phèdre*), their cunningly placed climaxes, their general rhythmic beat and subtle modulations, above all, the subordination of everything to the principle of unity of tone or "key"—these principles which govern each play as a whole also appear in the structure of the individual speech and of the single line. Even in those *tirades* or monologues which are the expression of the most spontaneous passion, the approaches to the final "orgasm" are graded with the most delicate accuracy; they recall those crescendos of Toscanini, of which it is hard to say whether you are most fascinated by the sense of inexorable onrush towards the climax or by the iron control of each separate minute unit in the progression. As for the single lines of Racine, so exquisitely are the vowel and consonant sounds chosen and blended and so unerringly do the stresses fall on the significant syllables in order to produce an incomparable imitative harmony, as in

> Ariane, ma sœur, de quel amour blessée,
> Vous mourûtes aux bords où vous fûtes laissée,

or in

> Le jour n'est pas plus pur que le fond de mon cœur,

that there floats above the intellectual and emotional content of the verse—like vapour above flowing water—what Henri Bremond has called the *chant*, the *poésie pure* of Racine.

In his successful reconcilement of the "representative" and the "formal" elements in art perhaps we may see not only Racine's highest achievement but the supreme lesson he can teach our age.

POLAND AND THE PRESENT WAR

OLGERD P. DE SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR

I

EVEN in time of peace it is not easy to discuss and analyse the conflicting problems arising between States and national groups, with an abstract and dispassionate aloofness. In time of war it becomes still more difficult. One may keep to a neutral attitude* as far as one's actions are concerned, but a human soul can hardly remain in cool detachment when vital issues are at stake. As the President of the United States has expressed it in his neutrality announcement of September 4, "even a neutral has a right to take account of facts. Even a neutral cannot be asked to close his mind and conscience." Indeed, such an absolute "neutrality in thought" would be the manifestation of a totally heartless indifference, particularly in our days when the political events of which we are all witnesses deploy before our bewildered eyes such an unfathomable depth of cold cynicism, base political lust and cruel hypocrisy.

The ominous words of Lord Grey on the eve of the Great War, "The lamps are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our lifetime," have proved a tragic prophecy, and they seem even more true today than twenty-five years ago when they were uttered. It seems that the peace brought about by the victory of the Allied powers in 1919 was nothing but a respite, a temporary armistice, and warfare having ceased on the battlefields, the struggle continued within the social and political organization of the world, ever increasing in intensity and scope.

As a result we have lived through twenty years of tension and unrest that have undermined the very foundations of our civilization. The principles which for generations have guided our thoughts and conduct are challenged and assaulted. Even the precepts of Christianity, which for almost twenty centuries have inspired mankind in the divine principles of love, justice, and mercy, have been dragged to the level of political slogans, and for a considerable part of the world's population have ceased to be a

*The author writes as a naturalized American citizen. [EDITORS' NOTE]

source of guidance. In some cases they have been replaced by political and social schemes, in others openly rejected, because since time immemorial they constituted the great obstacle to all those who for love, justice, and mercy would substitute hatred, selfishness, and vengeance.

Thus in the domain of politics, liberty and equality for the individual, the rule of majorities in government, and liberal ideals generally, have been gradually supplanted by the glorification of the state in which all rights and liberties of the people must be submerged. Within the comparatively short space of time which separates us from the Great War, fought to make the world safe for democracy, the major portion of the European continent has discarded the achievements of the pre-War period of liberal progress and bowed to the establishment of governments by strong and fanatical individuals for the benefit of the state rather than of the people.

It is the same with international relations. The old-fashioned policy of alliances along the lines of national sympathies and traditions, and of compromises and adjustments, has given way to ruthless world-wide expansions of political and economic systems, where the national aspirations of individual countries are entirely subjected to the ambitions of their particular types of government. Nowadays in the conduct of foreign policies it seems hardly important to think in terms of separate countries. The distinctions between them have shifted from considerations of nationality to political systems. Not so long ago we used to talk of fascist, communist, or democratic countries. Now, with the re-alignment of the world powers, we employ a still more adequate and simple division into the so-called "totalitarian" and "democratic" countries. The ideological affinity prevails most definitely in grouping the nations together above all considerations of nationality or race, and even of economic advantage. It is this ideological affinity that has rivetted together the Anglo-Saxon with the French and the Pole against the alliance of the German, the Russian, the Italian, and, maybe, the Japanese, in spite of all their age-long animosities and conflicting national interests. There can be no doubt that the present war is primarily and above all a war of ideology, and Messrs Chamberlain and Eden are right in stressing so constantly the fact that the great issue that lies at the bottom of the present world conflict is not a disagreement about some eastern European

city or territory, but a struggle for life or death in the defence of Christian civilization, Liberalism, and Democracy against the onslaught of the war machinery of the totalitarian neo-paganism with its fanatical cults of state collectivism, brutal force, and mechanized efficiency.

In this connection it is interesting to note how long it took even the leading statesmen to realize the true character of the totalitarian menace that has been looming on the horizon for the last five years. Only a month ago we were accustomed to consider the crisis as primarily a local Polish-German territorial conflict. Even today a large percentage of the average men in the Western hemisphere cling to this illusion.

The slowness in realizing clearly the fundamental issue of the world conflict is one of the principal handicaps which have prevented the democratic countries from mustering all their forces—superior as they may be in actual fact—in order to meet the impact of totalitarian aggression. It also has given to the latter a very important advantage in fighting the democratic powers separately and one at a time. And, last but not least, it has facilitated the shrewd playing up of mutual grudges and suspicions among them.

In this atmosphere of intrigue, propaganda, and general bewilderment, which prevails in the world at large, it is of the utmost importance to understand clearly at least the principal problems involved in the conflict as well as their background.

II

In the course of the last years one general attitude has become the keynote of the German propaganda and has been systematically and persistently popularized all over the world with a real German thoroughness. It represented to the world at large the Versailles Treaty as a crime against humanity, as an unadulterated villainy, and as a source of all the evils of the post-War period. It is a sad thing to admit, but there can be little doubt that a statement, no matter how groundless and erroneous, if repeated sufficiently often and persistently, usually becomes implanted in the mentality of an uncritical man and gradually moulds his judgment. As a rule the majority of us are neither sufficiently interested in, nor informed of, the details of political problems; and our opinions are shaped largely by what we get in the daily press, radio, and popular

summaries, just the channels of information most easily accessible to political propaganda.

In a summary, the usual presentation which we have become accustomed to (and alas! only too often passively convinced of) is as follows: (1) the Germans laid down their arms in 1919 being deceived by the Allied offers of easy peace conditions; (2) thus, they were tricked into the Versailles Treaty (now officially termed by the German Government the "Versailles dictate") which imposed on them inhuman and impossible obligations and suffering; (3) the National Socialists under Adolph Hitler have resuscitated martyrized Germany by smashing into pieces, and removing, the chains imposed by the Treaty of Versailles on the peaceful German people.

This is not true. The Germans laid down their arms in 1919, after five years of gallant fighting and great efforts, because they were utterly defeated on the battlefield and absolutely exhausted at home. They bowed their heads and asked for peace which was offered to them on conditions that any vanquished nation might expect from the victor, greatly softened, however, by the humanitarian attitude of President Wilson.

It is good to remember in this connection the well-known anecdote ascribed to the late Marshal Foch. When the German delegation came to the French headquarters, for working out the conditions for the armistice, Marshal Foch took from his desk a paper and read to the delegation a set of conditions so drastic and humiliating that the chief of the German delegation sprang to his feet and exclaimed in despair: "We cannot accept such conditions. No nation could treat that way a vanquished army." Marshal Foch smiled dryly and said: "I am glad you say so. Those are not our conditions, but the conditions Germany imposed on the French army in the 1871 armistice. Calm yourself. Our conditions will be different."

The harshness and inhumanity of the Versailles Treaty are greatly exaggerated, especially if we compare it with other treaties; for instance, the above-mentioned armistice of Versailles, dictated to France by Bismarck early in 1871, and the German-French peace treaty in May of the same year. The Versailles Treaty of 1919 reflected, certainly, a deplorable war psychology and national resentment, expressed particularly by Clemenceau, who played this time a role somewhat like that of Bismarck in the peace settlements

of 1871. Every just and liberal mind naturally deplores such manifestations of vengeance, but one can hardly expect matters to be different in an atmosphere of war and of exhaustion after war.

However, before we pass a definitive judgment, it is advisable to investigate how many of the written four hundred and forty Articles of the Versailles Treaty were actually fulfilled. It is this side of the Versailles problem that is usually passed over in silence by the German propaganda.

The principal parts of the Treaty were revised as soon as the general atmosphere in Europe had become more normal and most of them were already abandoned under the German republican government which preceded the National Socialist régime of Adolph Hitler. The Dawes Plan stabilized the German currency and put it on a gold standard as early as 1924. The original reparations fixed at the staggering sum of 132,000,000,000 gold marks was reduced to 3,000,000,000, and finally completely abandoned by the Allies. The occupation of the Rhineland provided by the Treaty, instead of lasting for fifteen years (until 1935), was cancelled in 1929. In 1926, as a result of the Locarno Settlement, Germany was admitted to the League of Nations as a great power. In all cases of territorial readjustment the population was granted two years to decide whether they would prefer to remain as citizens of the new country or to settle in Germany. If they chose the latter alternative a period of at least one year was provided for them for liquidation of their affairs. It is difficult to abstain from comparing this with the treatment of the citizens of Czechoslovakia during the lightning incorporation of their territories into Germany in 1938.

By 1931, two years before the coming to power of Adolph Hitler, Germany was already free from all the principal economic and political handicaps, originating from the Treaty of Versailles, that could influence her *peaceful* existence. It was not the national uprising of the German masses, exasperated by the "tentacles of the Versailles dictate," that brought the National Socialists to the foreground, but Hitler's shrewd and well-planned gamble on the economic crisis and unemployment in highly industrialized Germany, caught in the world depression that had settled in from 1929 on. This is clearly revealed by the number of National Socialist votes in the Reichstag elections. All through the early years of the German Republic and the reasonably prosperous

period of 1924-8, the National Socialist party had only thirteen representatives among the members of the Reichstag. With the depression setting in, their number rose to 107 in 1930 and reached its maximum of 230 (out of a total of 607) in the July elections of 1932.

Thus all the economic and political handicaps originating from the Versailles Treaty, which could influence Germany's *peaceful* existence, had been removed before Adolph Hitler rose to power in 1933—when he displayed such an extraordinary skill in exploiting to the advantage of his party the economic crisis in Germany and a short-sighted self-assurance of the extreme conservatives and militarists, led by Franz von Papen, Hugenberg, and Major von Hindenburg, the influential son and aide-de-camp of the aged Field-Marshal-President.

Adolph Hitler and the National Socialist party had no share whatsoever in the peaceful reconstruction of Germany, which had been made possible by the efforts of the Liberal German government from 1919 to 1933, and by the returning normality of world conditions.

At the moment of Hitler's coming to power only one category of restrictions, included in the Versailles Treaty, was still standing, and those were the restrictions that endeavoured to prevent Germany from returning to her *non-peaceful* activities—the military expansion that had been the cause of the war of 1914-19. Only those provisions limiting German re-militarization had survived from the settlement of 1919, and only those "tentacles of Versailles" were indeed removed by Adolph Hitler. Since then the German military machinery, the whole weight of which the world is feeling today, began to grow by leaps and bounds, such as the building up and mechanization of their army, navy, and air force, and the fortification of the de-militarized regions.

In the light of these facts one is justified in asking: What are those "tentacles of the Versailles dictates" choking the peaceful existence of Germany, those chains that have been broken and cast away by the heroic hand of the *Führer?* What is the superhuman feat performed by Adolph Hitler and the National Socialist party, aside—of course—from the building-up of the war machinery with a spirit worthy of a new Genghis Khan? What is the great blessing he has brought to Germany, so persistently announced to the whole world, far and wide, with all the bombast and thoroughness of the German propaganda, until we have begun to believe it ourselves?

III

The victory of the Allies and the Russian Revolution of 1917-19 resulted in a complete shift in the distribution of political forces on the European continent, particularly in Eastern and Central Europe where, on the ruins of the German, Austrian, and Russian empires, a large group of national states of various strength and character came into being.

Among those states the first place in size and political importance belonged to Poland, restored to an independent existence after more than a century of subjugation. In spite of the devastation of the War and the difficulty of establishing proper organization in those stormy years, Poland represented, from the beginning of her independence, a very considerable factor in European politics, being the strongest among the states separating Soviet Russia from Western Europe. With respect to population, Poland with her 35,000,000 held the sixth place among the European powers, ranking after Russia (168,000,000), Germany (67,000,000), Great Britain (47,000,000), Italy (43,000,000), and France (41,000,000). The same proportion is true as regards her territory.

Western public opinion has always tended to underestimate Poland and her role in European history. Somewhere in the back of our minds there was always present a hazy memory of some kind of historical crime committed against Poland in the eighteenth century, when that great nation had been attacked and partitioned by the three principal military powers of the period—Prussia, Russia, and Austria. The majority of us felt a sincere sympathy with the heroic struggle of the Poles against the partitioning powers and admired the strength of their national character which survived through more than a century of subjugation and oppression. But all this had happened so long ago and in a part of the world so remote from our immediate sphere of interest. Our public opinion was always accustomed to consider everything east of Germany as a strange and exotic region, practically beyond the European horizon.

Our historical memory is short. It usually does not go beyond the last two or three centuries, especially when it concerns countries not immediately connected with our own. We are apt to forget the great part played by Poland as an historical barrier protecting the Western world from the Asiatic invasions all through the

Middle Ages and up to 1683, when the Polish armies, commanded by King John III (Sobieski), stopped the Turkish avalanche at the very gates of Vienna. We often underestimate also the cultural and state-building mission of Poland which, from the tenth century on, succeeded in Christianizing, civilizing, and organizing the great part of Central and Eastern Europe, thus preventing it from becoming a colonial territory for the German armed expansion over the European East,—the famous "Drang nach Osten" that had been the cardinal item of German policy since the days of Charlemagne. Poland was prosperous and powerful. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries it became the granary of Europe, and out of its material prosperity there arose a culture that made Poland one of the greatest European centres of artistic and intellectual endeavour, with such famous seats of learning as the Universities of Cracow (founded in 1364), Wilno (1578), and Lwow (1668). At the same time the state itself passed through a most interesting and daring experiment in politics. Instead of following the general trend of political development, common to the great majority of European nations in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, which tended to a centralization and increasing absolutism, the Polish state was reorganized under the benevolent rule of the Jagellon dynasty into a Polish Commonwealth. In it all the various parts and dominions belonging to the Jagellon dynasty—such as the Kingdom of Poland, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and various Ruthenian and Baltic territories—were united into a Federation under the leadership of the Crown, limited by the federal constitution and the extremely liberal and far-going guarantees provided for the various parts of the Commonwealth. The federative and exceedingly liberal character of the Polish Commonwealth is primarily responsible for such a full survival until our day, within the Polish state, of the national character of the various minority groups. On the one hand it was a source of Poland's weakness when it had to face the pressure of the absolutist and centralized military monarchies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Prussia and Russia, but on the other, it created a great spirit of unity and loyalty to the Commonwealth among the various national groups, especially among the educated classes, united by the community of their cultural background.

The strength of this loyalty to the Commonwealth, in spite of

all the domestic frictions and quarrels, has best been illustrated in recent years when Poland was once more called to defend the Western World and Christian civilization from the revolutionary deluge pouring from the East. It was Poland that stopped in 1920 the triumphal march of the Soviet armies into Central and Western Europe; and at that moment of supreme sacrifice, and struggle which seemed almost hopeless, the Polish citizens—no matter to what national group they belonged—stood firmly together and saved the world from a revolutionary disaster.

IV

The restoration of Poland to an independent existence was certainly one of the aims for which the Great War was fought, but until the very end it remained rather a general principle than any definite practical plan. Both sides—the Allies and the Central Powers—were rivals in proclaiming their intentions to restore Poland, but they always made certain that this concerned only the Polish territories held by the opposite side. Such was the Russian proclamation of August 14, 1914, the German-Austrian manifesto of November 5, 1915, and other similar documents. The Western Powers, in spite of their sincere sympathy for the Polish cause, were hardly able to undertake any definite steps towards a full restoration of the Polish Commonwealth, being too deeply absorbed by their own difficulties, and fearing complications with their ally—the Russian Empire. It was the rapid disintegration of the Russian power through the revolution of 1917-18, and the German-Austrian defeat in 1919, that liberated all the Polish territories and gave them an opportunity to appear before the Peace Conference as an already united body.

The size and potential strength of this restored Poland were something of a surprise to many Western politicians, and it took a long time before the post-War organization of the Polish Commonwealth was fully and definitely recognized. Many criticisms were uttered from various quarters in Europe and America concerning the constitution of the Polish state. The radicals were dissatisfied because it established a serious barrier to the spreading of revolutionary influence by Soviet Russia. Business and financial interests viewed with apprehension the fact that so many areas of mineral wealth and highly developed industry had to be returned by

Germany to Poland because they were located in regions taken from the latter at the Partitions. The shifting of those regions from the German into the Polish economic system meant a great deal of readjustment, and also possible loss to the invested capital, and naturally European and American finance tended to oppose such shifts. Last but not least, there was the natural desire on the part of Germany and Russia to retain as many as possible of the Polish territories which they had respectively come to regard as their national property. Having a much closer contact with European and American political and financial circles than had the new Polish state, they only too often succeeded in influencing them in favour of their cause against the most rightful claims of Poland.

The series of plebiscites that had taken place in most of such contested regions proved one very interesting fact, namely, the extraordinary survival of the ethnical element that considered itself Polish and voted for Poland—even in those areas that had been most exposed to either the "Germanization" or the "Russianization" policy. Even in the famous "Corridor," the Province of Pomorze (Pomerania), the Poles showed a considerable majority (79.1 per cent Poles and 20.9 per cent Germans) in the census of 1921. According to the census of 1931, this majority increased to 89.9 per cent of Poles as against 10.1 per cent of Germans. A similar picture was presented by Upper Silesia, a wealthy industrial and mining region, formerly belonging to the Polish Commonwealth, which had to be divided between Germany and Poland in accordance with a plebiscite. On the whole, after all readjustments had been made, the distribution of principal national groups within the Polish state was approximately as follows: Polish, 69.1 per cent; Ukrainian, 13.9 per cent; Jewish, 8.6 per cent; White Russian, 3.1 per cent; German, 2.3 per cent; Russian, 0.4 per cent; Lithuanian, 0.3 per cent; Czech, 0.1 per cent. These percentages, based on the census of 1931, show that the total of national minorities in Poland did not exceed 30.9 per cent, which is far from being excessive as compared with the other European countries, including the present-day Germany.

Even the problem of Danzig which has been so prominently played up by propaganda hardly contains any injustice to either the German or the Polish side. Danzig is a city with a decided German majority. On the other hand, it belonged to Poland until the Partitions and, all through Polish history, was the principal

Polish trading centre on the Baltic, at the mouth of the Vistula which is and always has been the main economic artery of the Polish Commonwealth. Already to Frederick the Great it was apparent that whoever had command of Danzig had at his mercy the economic existence of Poland; and at the peace settlement it became imperative to find some compromise solution to safeguard the economic existence of Poland without reincorporating into the Polish state a city overwhelmingly German by population. The result was the granting to Danzig of a status of a Free City under the general supervision of the League of Nations. Germany was prevented from using it in the future as a base for military operations, or as a means to strangle restored Poland through a German control of the Polish access to the sea. Poland, on the other hand, did not acquire in Danzig any special rights beyond those necessary to safeguard her commerce, such as special port facilities, control of the railways connecting Poland with Danzig, a joint administration of customs, and a control of foreign relations.

The German-Polish relations, as they came from the peace settlement of 1919, did not contain anything that would necessitate in the future a European or even a local war. Certainly, there was a great deal of friction and many conflicting claims on both sides, something inescapable in such an international readjustment, particularly in view of the many historical grudges separating the Germans from the Poles, and the Slavs in general. However, with the return of European conditions to normal, and with the quieting down of war psychology, the friction began to abate and the principal conflicts between the two nations were gradually but quite successfully eliminated by compromises. Towards the end of the 1920's Germany and Poland had definitely organized their respective economic systems, adapting themselves to the general trends of European economic and political life; and a constantly growing co-operation between them was a most gratifying sight to all those who had a sincere feeling of sympathy for both nations and a genuine hope for peace and order.

Going back in my thoughts to those years that seem now to be so far away, I remember how I was impressed by the evident possibility of a friendly and permanent co-operation between Germany and Poland as long as the two nations kept to their *national* interests and abstained from venturing on any scheme of an *international* character that would take them out of their

peaceful domestic pursuits and throw them in the vortex of a world conflict.

Having been an eye-witness of the first period of the Eastern European settlement in 1919-22, I returned to the same field for the four years 1925-9 with the technical staff of a mission from a country that always has been, and still remains, absolutely neutral in the present conflict. Having no axe to grind with either side, and feeling sincere sympathies for both Germany and Poland, I was pleasantly surprised by the progressive return to normality in German-Polish relations, achieved within the decade 1919-29, which continued slowly but steadily in the early 1930's. The Polish-German understanding and the Non-Aggression Pact of 1934, so widely advertised by the National Socialist government, were a perfectly logical consequence of this gradual return to normality. It was the best proof that in reality there was no organic incompatibility between National Germany and National Poland.

V

The situation, however, changed radically and immediately, the moment it became apparent that the National Socialist régime was aiming not at the welfare and progress of *National* Germany, but at a German leadership in a gigantic *international* movement, based on the totalitarian ideology, so vividly expressed by Adolph Hitler's *Mein Kampf* and the numerous writings of A. Rosenberg and his school. From that moment the war was inevitable. The world was faced with the dilemma: either it must unite the democratic and liberal forces and fight for its very existence, or it must surrender all the fundamentals of Christian civilization and liberal progress and accept a revolutionary reorganization, totalitarian and neo-pagan in character.

Both sides began to prepare themselves, throwing off all disguise. The German-Italian alliance, the occupation of Austria and Czechoslovakia were mere phases of the great drive to put totalitarian Germany at the head of the victorious revolution that would change the face of the world. But the most ominous among all the events was the Berlin-Moscow alliance, in which the German National Revolution joined hands with the Russian International Revolution in the name of their common totalitarian ideology.

The democratic powers were greatly handicapped by being

less prepared for war and less militant in spirit. They had to mark time and delay in an effort to postpone the crisis as long as possible.

The tension came to a breaking point on the problem of Danzig, but this was merely a pretext for the war, just as had been the Sarajevo murder for the war of 1914. Any other issue would have had the same consequences. The weight of the swiftly approaching conflict was entirely in the ideological controversy which had split the world in two irreconcilable camps and made war inevitable.

VI

At the present moment we have lived through more than a month of the war itself. There is no doubt that the brunt of this first phase of the war has fallen heavily on Poland. The valiant struggle of this gallant people fighting against overwhelming odds showed that the Poles of today are worthy of their ancestors, who sacrificed themselves for the defence of Christianity and Western civilization from the Mongol hordes in the thirteenth century, the Turkish invasions of the seventeenth century, and the Russian revolutionary armies in 1919-20.

In seeking to estimate the significance of Poland's resistance to the German war machine, and her probable role in the remainder of the war, one must be on one's guard against German military propaganda. Like the political propaganda which preceded it, this has had its effect on public opinion. And small wonder when it is observed how much of our information, especially in neutral countries, has been coming directly from, or via, Berlin. The result has been grossly to exaggerate the swiftness and completeness of the German victory, whereas actually these were so unsatisfactory as to necessitate the premature calling in of Russia.

Poland's heroism during the last few weeks has been beyond all description and her self-sacrifice, as far as actual results are concerned, amounts probably to the first real victory that the Allies have gained over the Nazi-Communist block.

Poland's role in this war seems somewhat similar to that of the Belgium of 1914, but considerably more significant for the forthcoming development of military operations.

By taking the whole impact of German forces upon herself, Poland fought desperately against insurmountable odds and

succeeded, at a price of colossal losses and devastation, in keeping the majority of German forces in the East while the French and British were finishing their mobilization and the building up of the Western front.

We were told, with much bombast and many fanfares, of the German smashing success in the East. But let us examine it more closely and with a map at hand. After three weeks of a terrible drive, with all armed forces absolutely fresh and full of the enthusiasm that comes only at the early stages of war, the highly mechanized and overpoweringly more numerous German army, assisted by thousands of aeroplanes which bombarded mercilessly the Polish cities and villages, did not penetrate much beyond Western Poland. Warsaw was in Polish hands until the beginning of October; and "pockets" of Polish resistance seemed to indicate that, even along the line Bug-Vistula, the German occupation was far from complete. A large part of the Polish troops were still in the great woodlands and marshy plains of Eastern Poland, scarcely accessible to the German mechanized forces. The triumphal peace on victor's terms for which Germany hoped was—and even now is—as impossible of realization as in the first days of the war. The Polish Government has reorganized itself abroad, in the same way as the Belgians and the Serbians did in the war of 1914.

The necessity of shifting the troops to the Western front forced Adolph Hitler to appeal to his Soviet partner and ask him to cross the Polish frontier and relieve the German army. The consequent disintegration of the normal administrative organization of the Polish territories now invaded by the German-Soviet forces, no matter how painful for the Poles, may prove of very doubtful value to the German interests. History has shown that one of the greatest obstacles to any conquest in Eastern Europe has always been the general chaos which sets in when normal authorities are supplanted by a conquering army. The passive resistance of the population, the guerilla war of the remaining army units operating in those distant and little accessible areas, with the population co-operating with them and supplying them with the means of their existence, has always been a problem much more serious than we are accustomed to think judging by our Western standards. Charles XII of Sweden, Napoleon in 1812, and even the Germans themselves in 1918-19 had a very bitter experience in that respect. To organize this *hostile chaos* and to control it, requires a continued

effort and greater resources than conquest itself. That is also the main difficulty in establishing the buffer state planned by Germany, in order to separate the German forces from the Russians, after the partition is performed.

It is easy enough to form a local government under the conqueror's auspices, but a state must have also population, armed forces to maintain peace and order, and an administrative organization. In the conditions of a general chaos and guerilla war which are likely to develop here on a very large scale, no organization of a buffer state is possible unless it is fully supported by either German or Russian armed forces. And this brings inevitably the "German National Revolution" and the "Russian International Revolution" into immediate contact and close working, shoulder to shoulder, without any "safety belt" protecting Germany from the penetration of the dreaded Soviet communist influence.

Hitler and Stalin can agree on a political co-operation on the ground of common ideology: but still they represent two definitely conflicting currents of revolutionary activity, and each aspires to a final leadership in the world that they seek to create. Surprisingly Germany's leaders seem to have forgotten the sad experience in the creation of "buffer states" in Eastern Europe at the close of the Great War. After the Peace of Brest-Litovsk the German High Command solicitously built up and supported such states as were needful, not only as a source of supplies, but also as a safety-belt separating them from the communist contagion. All possible political combinations were tried in order to establish local governments—from conservative, semi-monarchical régimes (like the Ukrainian experiment of the Hetman Skoropadski) to the most radical socialist ones—but despite all their efforts these governments remained a legal fiction and were utterly unable to maintain themselves, except with the aid of the German military occupation. As a result the German troops were forced to remain on the Eastern front up to the Soviet frontiers; and anyone who saw the conditions prevalent among them after a few months of direct contact with Soviet propaganda from across the frontier remembers how little they could resist that propaganda. Equally unsuccessful proved the German attempts of 1918-19 to utilize those Eastern territories as sources of supplies. The German efforts to exact from the Russian, Ukrainian, or White Ruthenian (White Russian) peasantry the needed agricultural products met with a passive but stubborn

resistance and merely intensified the Slavic peasant's age-long traditional hatred of the German.

It is difficult to see, therefore, how the Germany of Hitler, Göring, and von Ribbentrop can be expected to succeed where the Germany of Hindenburg and Ludendorff so miserably failed; especially since, behind the Ukrainian, Russian, and White Ruthenian peasantry, we now find not the weak and disorganized Soviet Republic of 1918-19, but the powerful revolutionary empire of Stalin. Great must have been the extremity which forced Hitler to appeal to Stalin after but some three weeks of war and to risk the common action with the Soviet forces in Poland.

Hitler's call for the Soviet help was not a shout of victory but a cry of despair.

It may perhaps be said that from the standpoint of abstract military judgment the Polish campaign of September, 1939, has been a victorious *Blitzkreig*. It remains to be seen, however, whether this has not been a Pyrrhic victory.

Indeed, the territory of Poland is temporarily occupied by the Nazi-Soviet troops. But let us consider the price that Hitler had to pay for Stalin's assistance. Within a fortnight and almost without a shot the Soviet Revolutionary Empire has succeeded in establishing a practical control of the Baltic, in cutting off the German expansion to the Balkans, and particularly to the so much needed Roumanian oil fields, and in advancing the western frontiers of militant communism five hundred miles deeper into Europe, and establishing direct contact with the peasant populations of Central and South-Eastern Europe. The whole eastern *Lebensraum* which had been the very foundation of the National Socialist political programme had to be sacrificed, and the magnificent perspectives, so vividly described in *Mein Kampf*, had to be abandoned. No person acquainted with the economic conditions of Eastern Europe can seriously believe in the possibility of valuable economic help to Germany from Soviet Russia, no matter how widely this may be advertised for the consumption of the German masses and of Western public opinion. Russia herself needs every ounce of the raw material which Germany may require from her; especially, agricultural products and—what Germany so desperately needs—oil.

The only advantage that Germany has gained from the Soviet alliance has been the possibility of playing once more, and on a still

larger scale, her old game of bluff, endeavouring to intimidate Western public opinion and thus to induce the Allies to conclude a peace. For, if only the Allies are firm in their purpose, the large-scale operations on the Western front cannot fail—as the German leaders realize only too well—in ultimately bringing upon them a crushing defeat.

The position taken by the British and French Governments is too clear and definite to leave any room for doubt. The recent statements of Messrs Chamberlain and Churchill, Lord Halifax and M. Daladier, have done much to dispel the doubts that have been surreptitiously spread among the neutrals concerning the stand of the Allies. From now on Hitler will have to continue this war on the Western front, with an army already partly fatigued and depleted by the Eastern campaign and with the Eastern front permanently requiring the greatest vigilance and considerable numbers of troops to maintain there a semblance of order and to keep a close watch on the highly dangerous and treacherous ally—the Soviets.

One more observation. The actual character and methods of German warfare were little known up to the last four weeks of war when they were fully displayed in all their most terrific aspects during the Polish campaign. Now the Allies know exactly what to expect, and it is a great advantage in strategy to know in advance the methods and technical possibilities of the enemy. This knowledge could be acquired only by experience, and that experience Poland has given to the Allies by sacrificing herself without regard to her own sufferings and blood.

As the first phase of the war draws to a close, it is evident that so far Poland has borne almost the whole brunt of it. She has sacrificed to the Allied cause all she had. Her territory is temporarily occupied by the enemy; of her gallant army, some remnants will join the Allied forces in the West, whereas others remaining in the German and Soviet spheres of occupation will carry on guerilla warfare there. The Polish Government, headed by President I. Mościcki, succeeded in withdrawing safely abroad and was there reorganized. President Mościcki resigned his post and, in accordance with the Polish Constitution, appointed as his successor W. Raczkiewicz, one of the most popular and esteemed figures in Polish political life. The new President, who assumed office on September 30, in Paris, formed a Government headed by General W. Sikorski, who will be also at the head of the Polish troops fighting

shoulder to shoulder with the British and French armies. In this way the Polish Government from now on, and until the end of the war, will be in a position similar to that of the Belgian and Serbian Governments in the war of 1914 when the Central Powers succeeded in occupying their territories.

Great is the sacrifice of Poland and her glory will be eternal. Wrong and shortsighted are those who consider it a useless heroism. Historical experience teaches us that there is hardly such a thing as a useless heroism in a just war. All heroism and sacrifice sooner or later are bound to bring fruit which may not be apparent at the moment of the sacrifice. They will contribute to the one and only aim of the great war that is developing before our eyes—the victory of the forces of Goodness, of Humanity, Progress, and Light, over the forces of Evil and Darkness.

JAMES JOYCE AND HIS NEW WORK

LEON EDEL

IT seemed a little sad to many who read James Joyce's *Work in Progress* [1] when it was appearing in *transition* that this great Irish genius should spend years fashioning an apparently exaggerated, if energetic, *jeu d'esprit*. They asked themselves why he refused to turn his pen to the world about him and concerned himself exclusively with the past. Democracies tumbled; ideals were shattered; new generations sought to efface history. But James Joyce remained securely locked in the Dublin of the turn of the century.

The answer is important. We are dealing, in Joyce, not with a reporter of immediate things, but with a devoted craftsman whose interest is the versatility and the universality of his *métier*. While Europe was in flames, he was able to set down, in Trieste, Zurich, and finally Paris, his *Ulysses*, which dealt with man in a pre-war world. In the aftermath of the War—it has taken him seventeen years—he has set down *Finnegans Wake* which deals with the whole range of the human consciousness. For Joyce, the writer whose Jesuit strain serves his own ends exclusively, deals not only with the immediate world, which he has observed intensely, but with that world in relation to all time. The heroics of one age are to him but a repetition of the heroics of another. The dictators of today are but the Caesars of yesterday. "Birth and death are sufficiently violent for me," he once told Padraic Colum.

Of course he might have gone on writing other novels like *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. He might have done fifty or a hundred novels (like Mr Wells or Mr Bennett) or an endless series of plays (like Mr Shaw) in which there is constant reiteration of idea and constant revelation of the same personality. But Joyce does not seem to want to leave many pictures of his time. The process of turning out novel after novel does not excite him. He is a virtuoso who wishes to enlarge the writer's method and technique. He is a scientist in letters who likes nothing better than to rig out a new experiment. For him one book is but a sketch from which a larger canvas will grow, and each canvas is more ambitious than

[1] The name under which *Finnegans Wake* was known until it appeared in book form, The Viking Press, 1939; distributed in Canada by the Macmillan Company of Canada.

the last. In every sense Joyce is like a composer who essays many forms. He must write chamber music, overtures, piano compositions, and songs, but he must try his hand also at the symphony. James Joyce has so far written only one book in each form, and after more than thirty years he has published only seven books, two of them slender volumes of poetry.

He started with verse, little songs such as come to the lips of a creative writer, much like the *villanelle* that is fashioned in the *Portrait*. From the song Joyce progressed to the prose-picture, the short story; and *Dubliners* gives us these "slices of life," stories of haunted and lonely people, of children first awakening to life, of patriots who weep for Parnell, of the delicate quivering threads that bind a husband to his wife and a wife to her husband.

The next step was the drama-picture, and Joyce wrote *Exiles*, a play, dealing again with the relations between husband and wife, a tightly-written play, filled with rhythmic speech and acutely probed psychological situations. It is conventional drama touched by the hand of a great poet.

And the next step? A fusion of the prose-picture and the drama-picture—the novel. *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* marked Joyce's first real experiment, an attempt to dramatize the thoughts and impressions that flow through the mind mingling with the images and sounds that impinge upon one's consciousness through ear and eye. Writers had told their readers of thoughts going on in the minds of their characters. But now the writer stood back and allowed the reader to look directly into the mind and observe thought, image, sound, as if he were looking at a film projected on a screen.

Joyce did not stop there. Beyond the novel lay the epic, fusing all the forms he had previously essayed—poetry, the prose-picture, the drama-picture, the narrative—and in *Ulysses* he sang a mighty theme, the story of a day in Dublin, June 16, 1904, mighty because, as Mr S. Foster Damon points out, it is also a day lifted from all time, a day in the history of the world. Here for more than eight hundred pages he ranges through the complex detail of a day, from morning to night, resorting to elaborate literary devices to tell his story so that the reader may at all times move with the characters, hear with their ears, see with their eyes, and consistently be inside their minds, thinking with them. In *Ulysses* Joyce attempts the

most complete literary picture we have yet had of the stream of consciousness.

In the striking image of William James, all effort to explore the stream of consciousness is like turning up the lights to see what the darkness looks like. Consciousness is mobile, evanescent, combining word, sound, image, following many simultaneous tracks. To put this on paper is to attempt to put into words the meaning of a piece of music. Where we touch this realm, words, magnificent, imperfect instruments that they are, become virtually useless.

For who is to nail down on paper a moving, ever-elusive thought-stream, and how is it to be done? Henry James (did they not say he wrote fiction like a psychologist?) looked into the consciousness and selected from it, and put on paper in logical, reasoned form the thoughts of highly civilized beings. Proust too, in his long sweeping sentences gave an impression of broad deep channels of thought. But it was left to Joyce to give us a moving picture of thought—its jumbled incoherence, its automatic combination of image with half-formed and deformed words, and above all its fluidity. He has not always succeeded, but in *Ulysses* he came closer to it than any other writer: in effect he was able to dramatize the mind.

Ulysses was the story of a day in Dublin, a day in the lives of Leopold Bloom and Stephen Dedalus, a day, as we have noted, in the history of the world, and a day in that bottomless eternity that Joyce's priest so vividly describes in the *Portrait*. *Finnegans Wake* is again an advance: it is the epic of a night plucked from that selfsame eternity, and yet because it is a night, merging with all the nights that have gone before in our individual and collective consciousness, it carries, floating in its mighty stream fragments of the epics that have gone before, the flotsam and jetsam of the ages. In it past and present come together in one dimension. Sleep and nightmare, unconsciousness and half-consciousness; history and literature; the stories of wars and deeds accomplished; fables; football field and theatre and tavern; the great and the near-great—the backwash of Time sweeps into the present, and sweeping out again carries the present with it. And words, words that came with the infancy of the race and grew with time, words are here in all their confusion, words as they have been heard mingling with words they resemble, words deformed and altered and mixed with words from other languages, often inter-marrying with them, in order to reproduce not only this vast panorama, but

all the sounds and smells and sensations associated with it, to render phantasmagoria articulate while keeping it phantasmagorial.

II

My first glimpse of James Joyce was at the Paris opera ten years ago. Sullivan, the Franco-Irish tenor, was singing *Les Huguenots* that night. From my *loge* I saw Joyce, upright, graying hair combed back, immaculately dressed, assisted to his seat, peering through two pair of thick glasses, one superimposed on the other. There was no mistaking our contemporary Homer, the author of a modern Odyssey.

He was not blind, but he was going through a bad phase then in the struggle to overcome failing sight. I doubt whether he could see the "traffic" of the stage distinctly that night, but he must have heard more than comes to the ordinary ear. From time to time his fine voice—he wanted once to be an opera singer—would rise above others with a shout of "Bravo!" when Sullivan would finish some grand aria, and his applause continued after others ceased applauding.

During an intermission I saw him again, leaning on his stick (was it Stephen Dedalus' ashplant?) cocking his head to catch voices all about him and looking into blurred space. He gave me the feeling then that all life flowed into him through his ears, that it has always come to him in this way. Voices, bells, the sound of hammering, distant movement of traffic, music, the patter of rain, the whole world of sound that moves about and in our visible world must be recorded in his mind, much as most people record what they see. And part of these sound patterns are words, their relation to each other, their place in the sentence and in the rise and fall of the human voice. He has learned to render sound with the distinctness a pianist gives to his every note:

> The fellows were practising long shies and bowling lobs and slow twisters. In the soft grey silence he could hear the bump of the balls; and from here and from there through the quiet air the sound of the cricket bats: pick, pack, pock, puck: like drops of water in a fountain falling softly in the brimming bowl.

Finnegans Wake is rich in such direct rendering of sound from the "bababadalgharaghtakamminarronnkonnbronntonnerronntuonnthunntrovarrhounawnskawntoohoohoordenenthurnuk!" of thunder to the "Flip! Flep!" of wet clothes on wet stones:

Will we spread them here now? Ay, we will. Flip! Spread on your bank and I'll spread on mine. Flep! It's what I'm doing. Spread!

Beyond and above this direct imprisonment of sound in the English alphabet is his rendition of emotion and sensation through the sound and pace and rhythm of the language used. From the infinitely varied associations of the ideas he has chosen to verbalize, Joyce has taken those whose *sounds* best suit his purpose. This play with the sound of words has naturally resulted in an enormous number of intricate puns. It has also created a work as near to music as prose can come.

Finnegans Wake must be read with the ear. It may not be a coincidence that Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, the hero—if such a book can be said to have a hero—has been given that name and that Joyce substitutes forms of "earwig" for it. The earwig, we find in the *Oxford Dictionary*, is "an insect which is supposed to creep into the ear." But it is the Old English form of the word that is interesting—*éarwicga* (note the resemblance to Earwicker), which meant, literally, an "ear-punner." When we realize how important the pun is in this work we can believe that there is a definite reason for the choice of the name.

This extravagant bit of play can be pursued still further. Earwicker, the *ear* of whose name recalls Eire, figures in the book also as Persse O'Reilly, and we find that *perce-oreille* is French for "earwig." H. C. Earwicker is also known by his initials as H.C.E., and this becomes in the book Here Comes Everybody. It is he who lies asleep as the book opens, this "imposing everybody . . . constantly the same as and equal to himself and magnificently well worthy of any and all such universalisation." He is a Dublin pub-keeper, father of two children, and first as he sleeps lightly, the evening's events in jumbled form pass through his semi-conscious mind, mingling with the stream of history. Then comes deeper sleep; nightmare; restlessness and discomfort, until the prose grows heavy and dense and almost as meaningless as sleep. Gradually smoother slumber comes, "the night's unconsciousness abates," day breaks and the world (and the book) begins to stir with life again. (*Ulysses*, too, was written in this way. The morning scenes in Dublin are sharper and more clearly-defined than those of afternoon and evening which become increasingly blurred.)

That is the barest outline of the six-hundred-and-twenty-eight-page book. It contains recurrent motifs and themes and characters

which take on multiple forms. And it is built, we are told, on the philosophic system of the Neapolitan, Giambattista Vico. Mr Samuel Beckett explains the philosophical basis of the book as follows:

> In the beginning was the thunder: the thunder set free Religion, in its most objective and unphilosophical form—idolatrous animism: Religion produced Society, and the first social men were the cave-dwellers, taking refuge from a passionate Nature: this primitive family life receives its first impulse towards development from the arrival of terrified vagabonds: admitted, they are the first slaves: growing stronger, they exact agrarian concessions, and a despotism has evolved into a primitive feudalism: the cave becomes a city, and the feudal system a democracy: then an anarchy: this is corrected by a return to monarchy: the last stage is a tendency towards interdestruction: the nations are dispersed, and the Phoenix of Society arises out of their ashes.

Vico, then, is apparently as important in *Finnegans Wake* as Homer is in *Ulysses*. Joyce builds this book on his philosophy as he built *Ulysses* around the Odyssey. In the earlier work the hero was the wanderer and the incidents of his day's wanderings (a fragment of his life's wanderings) were patterned on the incidents that befell the Homeric hero in his years of travels. So in *Finnegans Wake* the hero, lying asleep and occasionally dreaming, is the product of Vico's conception of society. The ages and events have fashioned him. Dublin figures in the story, it is the city around which history has unfolded (like any other city) and the Liffey River flows through the dream, a river like any other river, but also the river of life; a river which is a woman, Anna Livia Plurabelle, or Iseult la Belle, but also woman, the source of life. And Earwicker is Tristram, and Adam and Humpty Dumpty—did not both of them fall?—and the man in the ballad of *Finnegan's Wake*, who also fell, but revived at his wake when the word whiskey was mentioned. . . . The first words of the book set the Liffey running past Earwicker's pub, apparently situated near Phoenix Park . . .

> riverrun, past Eve and Adam's, from swerve of shore to bend of bay, brings us by a commodious vicus of recirculation back to Howth Castle and Environs.

Joyce begins to pile up the complex problems which make this book a terror and a delight from the outset. The river is to run back through history, by way of (vicus) Vico and come back again to Howth Castle and Environs, in a word to H.C.E.—Humphrey Chimpden Earwicker, Here Comes Everybody.

In the third paragraph there is a clap of thunder. The evening has been stormy. Is it the thunder that set free Religion and

started society on its long travail? It starts Earwicker certainly on his long night of uncomfortable sleep. The river is running past Earwicker's pub. He lies asleep by his wife, Maggie, and nearby are their children Kevin and Jerry, and they are Eve and Adam and all the daughters and sons through the ages of Eve and Adam.

As we venture further into the book we find ourselves in a labyrinth of words and images, constructed with the same technical virtuosity that we saw in *Ulysses*. We discover the familiar fragments published as *Work in Progress*, but now in their proper setting—the fable of the "Mookse and the Gripes," the magnificent chapter of Anna Livia Plurabelle and the washerwomen, the story of the "Ondt and the Gracehopper," and the section published as "Haveth Childers Everywhere" which contains the names of many cities, turned into words by elaborate punning even as the names of rivers are used to narrate the river chapter of Anna Livia.

The book cannot be described adequately and it is too complex an organism for anyone to claim that he has penetrated to its depth and uncovered every meaning and every allusion. To understand the work sentence by sentence one would have to be able to go through the same series of mental associations in reading, as Joyce went through in composing. "It is unlikely that Joyce himself understands from re-reading of his . . . writing all that he thought it had in the way of implication," Mr Robert McAlmon said once. And this is probably true. It will forever be a work into which one will dip time and again for the delightful play of fancy and the pleasure to be found in its inventive language. Mr Edmund Wilson's two illuminating articles published recently in the *New Republic* are probably the clearest interpretation of some of the problems in the book while being an excellent aid to reading it. The series of essays published by Sylvia Beach in 1929 and recently republished, *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* contains many clues, probably furnished by Joyce himself. They were published in *transition* when *Finnegans Wake* was but a series of fragments, but the writers knew Joyce and must have questioned him. The curious will find that these essays, and a few other articles, open pathways to further exploration.[2]

[2]*Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* by 12 Writers, Paris, Shakespeare and Company, 1929, recently republished in America by New Directions, Norfolk, Conn.; Padraic Colum, "A New Work by James Joyce" (*New York Times Book Review*, May 7, 1939)

III

Our best clue to Joyce's method is in the text itself. I have selected for closer examination the passage in the Anna Livia chapter, Joyce's reading of which was recorded some years ago. Night is falling on the Liffey; two washerwomen are talking about the people whose clothes they wash. As the shadows darken, the waters rush swiftly by into the night, the river widens, the women become an eternal elm and stone on the river bank. Hearing Joyce read this passage one realizes there is method to his madness; and one becomes acutely aware of the extent to which *Finnegans Wake* is addressed to the ear.

The section has been republished several times, and in almost every instance Joyce revised it. By comparing the different versions we can study the way in which the work grew. In its first form it is fairly easy to follow. In the attempt to find richer sounds and associations, Joyce made further changes and the final form differs considerably from the original. An interesting sidelight is thrown on the text by a French adaptation, published in the *Nouvelle Revue Française* in May, 1931, made by seven persons, with Joyce presiding. It took them about fifteen sessions of three hours each to translate this fragment.

I know of the existence of five versions. These are:

(1) The first draft, called *Work in Progress*, published in *Le Navire d'Argent*, Paris, Oct. 1, 1925.

(2) Expanded and revised, published in *transition*, no. 8, Nov., 1927, Paris, under the title *Work in Progress*.

(3) Again revised and published under the title of *Anna Livia Plurabelle* in New York by Crosby Gaige in a *de luxe* limited edition.

(4) *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, Criterion Miscellany no. 15, London, Faber and Faber, 1930. (This version may be the same as (3).)

(5) The final version in *Finnegans Wake*, pp. 196-216.

I have not had the opportunity of comparing all the versions,

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and "A Portrait of James Joyce" (*New Republic*, May 13, 1931); S. Foster Damon, "The Odyssey in Dublin" (*Hound and Horn*, III, no. 1); Louis Gillet, "M. James Joyce et son nouveau roman" (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, 15 août, 1931); Harold Salemson, "James Joyce and the New Word" (*Modern Quarterly*, Fall, 1929); William Troy, "Stephen Dedalus and James Joyce" (*Nation*, Feb. 14, 1934); Edmund Wilson, "The Dream of H. C. Earwicker" (*New Republic*, July 12, 1939), "H. C. Earwicker and Family" (*New Republic*, June 28, 1939), and "James Joyce" (*New Republic*, Dec. 18, 1929).

but a study of (1), (4), and (5) serves our purpose. With one or two exceptions, (4) and (5) are identical. But the differences between (1) and (4) are sufficiently great to afford us an interesting study in conscious complication.

The first draft, as we have remarked, is written for the most part in straightforward English. One is almost tempted to say that Mr Joyce wrote the whole book out first in traditional form and then proceeded to translate it into the special idiom he devised for the work.

> Well, you know or don't you know or haven't I told you every story has an end and that's the he and the she of it.

This direct statement becomes in (4):

> Well, you know or don't you kennet or haven't I told you every telling has a taling and that's the he and the she of it.

We observe at once the whole tendency of the work: substitution of related and associative words for the actual word . . . ; "every story has an end" has given Mr Joyce the opportunity to play with "tailing," "telling," and "taling" even as he has substituted "kennet," presumably "ken it," for "know." But read the two sentences aloud and compare their rhythm and style. The changes, in addition to the new associations introduced into the sentence, woo the ear cunningly.

A little further "What time is it?" becomes "What age is at?" and "It must be late" is changed to "it saon is late." The word "soon" and the river Saône combine to form the word "saon," because Joyce in this chapter uses all possible names of rivers and water associations, to evoke the flow of water, its freshness and clearness on the one hand, its capacity for stagnation and muddiness on the other.

"It's ages now since I or anyone last saw Waterhouse's clock." This was modified to " 'Tis endless now since eye or ereone last saw Waterhouse's clogh," and in the final version the "since" is further modified to "senne" which may refer to the river Seine. The "ereone" is apparently an allusion to Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*. The change from "clock" to "clogh" is not entirely clear, except that the softer "clogh" is closer to the washerwoman's Irish speech. In the name Waterhouse Joyce obtains another water allusion.

"They took it asunder, I heard them say," Joyce altered to "I hurd them sigh," and in the recording it is interesting to hear the author sigh as he reads "they took it asunder" and the following

words "when will they reassemble it." There again is a notable example of the music of *Finnegans Wake*. Read aloud, the words "asunder," "sigh," "reassemble," in succession constitute a series of carefully-scaled sounds which the word "say" instead of "sigh" would disturb. Incidentally "sigh" again is closer to the way the Irishwoman would say it.

There are puns on all sides. The washerwoman complains that her back hurts and says she'd "want to go to Aches-les-Pains." Then they hear the bell:

> Pingpong! There's the Belle for Sexaloitez! And Concepta de Send-us-pray! Pang!

"Wring out the clothes! Wring in the dew!" says the washerwoman.

In all versions the phrase "It's churning chill" occurs and it is illustrative of the effects Joyce seeks to produce. Ingenious is Joyce's introduction of two rivers of this world and one of the next, the Aar of Switzerland, India's Irrawaddy, and Hades' Lethe. The river is widening. The washerwomen are shouting at each other above the rush of waters. And one of them complains:

> It's that irrawaddyng I've stoke in my aars. It all but husheth the lethest sound.

Joyce reads that sentence brilliantly. There is, first, annoyance in his voice because the washerwoman cannot hear, and then it sinks to a whisper as he slowly, deliberately, hauntingly enunciates "it all but husheth the lethest sound." In the final version "sound" becomes "zsound."

We come to a striking example of alteration. "Wait till the rising of the moon, love," Joyce wrote originally; "Wait till the honeying of the lune love," he wrote in later versions, introducing a play on honeymoon, the honey colour of the moon, and changing moon to the French *lune* to achieve alliterative and musical effect in the words "lune love." The French translation successfully carries out this idea with "Attends moun amour que la lune s'y mielle," but the effect of "lune love" is not there.

"Twinkletoes" is changed to "trinkettoes" and "queer" to "quair," "same" to "seim." In the French version a neat pun is obtained, throwing light on "howmulty plurators made eachone in person?" "Combien bien d'incestres pour faire chaque seul nous."

And then we come to the final lines, practically unchanged in all the versions, where Joyce seems from the outset to have achieved

expression of his mood. The lines have been much quoted. To hear Joyce read them is to feel the night descend, with its water sounds, the moisture in the air, the washerwomen transformed into elm and stone . . .

> Can't hear with the waters of. The chittering waters of. Flittering bats, fieldmice bawk talk. Ho! Are you not gone ahome? What Thom Malone? Can't hear with bawk of bats, all thim liffeying waters of. Ho, talk save us! My foos won't moos. I feel as old as yonder elm. A tale told of Shaun or Shem? All Livia's daughtersons. Dark hawks hear us. Night! Night! My ho head halls. I feel as heavy as yonder stone. Tell me of John or Shaun? Who were Shem and Shaun the living sons or daughters of? Night now! Tell me, tell me, tell me, elm! Night night! Telmetale of stem or stone. Beside the rivering waters of, hitherandthithering waters of. Night! [pp. 215-16].

In the "What Thom Malone" Joyce changed "tom" to "Thom" in the final version and similarly "the" to "thim" in "all thim liffeying waters of," adding to the music with the related sounds of "thom" and "thim" and perhaps thinking of bringing the name Tim in juxtaposition with Tom.

But one cannot explain all the reasons for Joyce's changes. The principal reasons are clear enough.

IV

Curious and revealing as the alterations in the different texts are, they are perhaps no more interesting than the different forms the same phrases take on in the book itself. "Dear dirty Dublin" becomes "Dear dirty dumpling," "hear Hubty Hublin," "deep dorfy doubtlings." And there are infinite variations on "The Rocky Road to Dublin"—"the quaggy way for stumbling," "the way to wumblin," and "the lucky load to Lublin."

So we find, too, queer echoes of phrases and passages from *Anna Livia Plurabelle* in other chapters:

> . . . every crowd has its several tones and every trade has its clever mechanics and each harmonical has a point of its own, Olaf's on the rise and Ivor's on the lift and Sitric's place's between them [p. 12].
>
> . . . every dam had her seven crutches. And every crutch had its seven hues. And each hue had a differing cry. Sudds for me and supper for you and the doctor's bill for Joe John [p. 215].

The rhythm in each passage is the same. Or,

> . . . like any Etrurian Catholic Heathen, in their pinky limony creamy birnies and their turkiss indienne mauves [p. 215];

. . . like any enthewsyass cuckling a hoyden in her rougey gipsylike chinkaminx pulshandjupeyjade and her petsybluse indecked o' voylets [pp. 260-1];

in which the second is an elaborate embroidery on the first. This passage in *Anna Livia*—

Then all that was was fair. Tys Elvenland! Teems of times and happy returns. The seim anew [p. 215]—

becomes:

When who was wist was ware. En elv, et fjaell. And the whirr of the whins humming us howe. His hume. Hencetaking tides we haply return . . . [p. 261].

And about four hundred pages further on it develops into:

For nought that is has bane. In mournenslaund. Themes have thimes and habit reburns. To flame in you.

This is all part of the pattern, much as a fragmentary idea in the opening pages of *Ulysses* develops as it recurs in Bloom's or Dedalus' consciousness until it springs into a full-blown image or sequence of ideas near the end of the book. So here themes and phrases intertwine, as complicated as an orchestral score, as subtle and often as difficult to follow.

V

An understanding of *Finnegans Wake* lies in an understanding of the roles of the eye and the ear in this work. For centuries now, since minstrels and ballad-singers yielded to the printed page and man gave his eye the work his ear had done, our auditory sense has to a considerable extent played second fiddle to the visual in literature—with the exception of the drama.

In *Finnegans Wake* Mr Joyce asks the eye to look at unfamiliar words and shapes on the printed page and expects it to communicate them to the ear. He asks the impossible. Only Mr Joyce's ear can catch all the sounds, all the beauties of his verbal fancies. The unprepared eye will invariably refuse to co-operate. Mr Joyce has put on paper a work that in reality should be heard, not read. That is why readers accustomed to having their eyes move comfortably and easily along the printed page find the book difficult. They trip and stumble. Their eye reads "soon" and suddenly discovers it is "saon." And even rougher obstacles than that lie in the path. Mr Joyce's road to Dublin is indeed a rocky one.

Mr Joyce should have committed his book to print only in the way that a composer prints the score of his work. He should have provided us with the facility for hearing it read aloud and the only way to do that is to record it. A tremendous task, for two pages of this long book fill a large-size record. But this record teaches more than hours of painstaking reading of the text. When Mr Joyce reads it aloud he indicates to us how little we are equipped to bring to life the notes he has written.

I should like to hear him read, for instance, the passage in which, apparently, Earwicker consoles his frightened child:

> You were dreamend, dear. The pawdrag? The fawthrig? Shoe! Hear are no phanthares in the room at all, avikkeen. No bad bold faathern, dear one. Opop opop capallo, muy malinchily malchik! Gothgorod father godown followay tomollow the lucky load to Lublin for make his thoroughbass grossman's bigness. Take that two piece big slap slap bold honty bottomsside pap pap pappa . . . Sonly all in your imagination, dim. Poor little brittle magic nation, dim of mind! [p. 565].

Joyce puns all through here. There is even a pun in three languages, changing the Russian "muy malinchy malchik" (my little boy) to "malinchily" thus relating it to "melancholy" so that it might mean "my melancholy bad little chick," "mal" the French for bad prefixed to chick; "muy" is also Spanish for "very."

Or again, one would want to hear Joyce's rendition of the opening words of the last chapter:

> .Sandhyas! Sandhyas! Sandhyas!
> Calling all downs. Calling all downs to dayne. Array! Surrection. Eireweeker to the wohld bludyn world. O rally, O rally, O rally! Phlenxty, O rally! To what lifelike thyne of the bird can be. Seek you somany matters. Haze sea east to Osseania. Here! Here! Tass, Patt, Staff, Woff, Havv, Bluvv and Rutter. The smog is lofting [p. 593].

A characteristic passage, evocative of morning. What would Joyce's voice make of them. "Array"—"arise, array thyself," and also a ray of sunshine, and equally "Hurray!" "Surrection"—Resurrection, perhaps also Insurrection. "Eireweeker"—Eire now becomes part of Earwicker's name. "The wohld bludyn world," with its play on "wold" and "world." And then more punning on O'Reilly, with the series of "O rally." The reference to Phoenix Park, the Phoenix, day rising from the dead ashes of the night. "Haze sea" and "haste ye." And then the allusions to the news agencies, spreaders of news to the "wohld bludyn world"—Tass of Russia, Pat of Poland, Stefani of Italy, Wolff of Germany (pre-

Nazi; now the D.N.B.), Havas of France, and Great Britain's Reuters. "Calling all downs to dayne"—the "dayne" a reference to Earwicker's Scandinavian ancestors. There are probably many more allusions buried in these few words in which Joyce announces that the night is over, man is resurrected from sleep, the nightmare is gone, "the smog is lofting." "Smog," of course, like Lewis Carroll's "slithy" is a portmanteau word—for "smoke" and "fog."

Somewhere in the *Portrait* Stephen Dedalus asks himself: "Did he then love the rhythmic rise and fall of words better than their association of legend and colour?" Joyce loves words as probably no one in the whole reach of English literature loved them, their rise and fall, their associations of legend and of colour, the depth of history buried in each word. He sees with his ears as well as hears with them. He has all the sensitivity of a blind man but, being able to see, is the more richly endowed. And he must forgive us if we cannot go all the way with him.

Finnegans Wake, like *Ulysses*, is a great, a magnificent success—and failure. Both will remain books which will haunt us and to which we shall return, baffled, sometimes puzzled, and yet finding there great power and suggestiveness and inventiveness—an impression as of the complexity of the whole of life poured into a book's mould, which neither music, nor language, nor any artifice of man has yet captured. But where writers before him opened only small apertures on this world for all to see through, Joyce has flung open wide windows on vistas completely clear only to himself.

CANADIAN DRAMA

ARTHUR L. PHELPS

CRITICAL appraisal of the accomplishment by Canadians in the field of drama yields negative findings. Artistically we tend to be a derivative and flaccid people. In drama we are not much more than eager and delighted parasites, as our ninth Drama Festival so patently proclaimed.

Yet, we have been honestly busy in connection with the drama. So busy indeed that one of the first tasks of the critic is to discriminate between the literary and the social significance of the activity he examines. And even after the world of delightful self-conscious green-room gossip and footlights parade in which public and actors revel has been ticketed for what it is worth (and it is worth a good deal; the society which supports a dramatic activity has always been important in the history of drama) and set aside, the composite nature of the drama itself complicates analysis. Indeed, a flared match at a given moment in a particular scene in a dark house may seem more effective than all the words which led up to it. Often the stage director and the electrician are the real makers of what the audience calls good drama. Even those literary persons whose strategy it is to give a place and function to the always suspected and secretly despised director in order that they may keep him within it, frequently deplore our lack of a national theatre and established stages in centres of population; in reality they are admitting the truth: drama does not exist until it is off the paper and into the theatre where stage, actors, producer, director, audience, each play a part in bringing about the thing that happens.

Yet, however important setting, pantomime, and gesture may be, and however difficult it may be to demonstrate that they are nevertheless secondary, the fundamental truth of drama must be clarified and maintained: that the word spoken is the originating, decisive, conditioning matter in the drama that is really important. Intensification of the emotional and intellectual forces latent in human speech occurs in the theatre of course—it is the glory of the theatre that it is so—but the inner ear of the literary artist must first have heard that speech, made it, and felt it in the making.

The initial rhythm of a play is the rhythm in the mind of the writer of the play. And it is this sort of revealing, conditioning speech, delicate as gossamer from a Mercutio or a Father Keegan, and swift and terrible as Fate from Macbeth or Emperor Jones, that is the stuff we call the literature of the drama. Perhaps it gives us our very greatest poetic literature. Whether it ever comes into complete existence without the stimulus upon its author of a demanding audience and an active stage, can of course be seriously questioned. But to push argument to the point where the sorry lack of good Canadian dramatic writing is considered due simply to the fact of our dispersed population and lack of continuous audiences and established theatres is to comfort ourselves foolishly. To say that we cannot expect a drama made out of ourselves in Canada until we have established theatres or a national theatre and found audiences is omitting altogether the aspect of our dramatic dearth which it is the business of this paper to reveal. Drama is a composite art. The theatre and its people with all their ways and tricks are tremendously important. But the word spoken is all-important. It is the literature of the drama that counts. It is possible to imagine that if even a few young Canadians had something to say, and trained themselves to say it through the theatre, we might demand the audience and beget the theatre almost automatically. The creative virtue in the word spoken—and first written to be spoken—cannot be ignored. At present, whatever else we lack in connection with Canadian drama, and we lack a great deal else, we lack the virtue of that word. On the literary side of Canadian drama we are scarcely imitative; merely ignorantly and fatuously feeble. Until we begin asking ourselves what our Canadians have said, what they want to say, what they should or might be saying, and how they are saying it through the drama, we shall not study the state of the dramatic activity in Canada either wisely or fruitfully. Not all the eminent lawyers and retired colonels and ardent dowagers and sweet young things in the whole Canadian box of dramatic tricks can get along without the Canadian creative word in its beauty and its strength if we are to have a Canadian drama. The question is, by whom and under what conditions is that word to be written? We await the Canadian literature of the drama. Any critical approach must be directed straight at this point.

To state the case thus is to raise issues which go far beyond the

mere matter of the state of the drama in Canada. It can give excuse to some to deplore any emphasis upon nationalism in the arts; it can set others to the consideration of what they might call *derivitis*, the disease of the Canadian consciousness, and to point to the chief significance of Professor Edgar's article on Canadian criticism in the July issue of the QUARTERLY: the implicit admission of the general lack of governing objectives and clear principles throughout the local and insipid casualness of Canadian so-called critical writing: altogether too few pens with something to say and saying it with power. Such a state of things may or may not be deplorable in the field of criticism; perhaps we do not need Canadian critics who have something to say as Canadians to Canadians. In the field of drama, however, if stuff is not coming out of the Canadian scene, physical, intellectual, and emotional, in Canadian speech, whether we want it or not, whether we should or should not have it, we have no Canadian drama in a strict sense. The drama that we can call Canadian, whether it be played by Mongols in Mongolia or by Canadians in Victoria, B.C., must come out of a Canadian consciousness possessed of its own local shadings on human misgivings and delights. It must carry the Canadian word. It must be both Canadian and literature in the broad sense that someone among us has revealed through speech that is beautiful and strong the life that we know is our own. Our activity in producing other people's plays does not give us Canadian drama. Canadian drama must be in our words, made out of the stuff of our own people.

An examination, from this standpoint, of the drama that has got itself printed in Canada as Canadian, is indeed sorry business. The notorious artistic sterility of the Canadian is noticeable here as elsewhere. The record of output during recent years arranged and commented upon by Mr Milne, in the QUARTERLY's "Letters in Canada," shows substantially what any critical examination will reveal: deplorably close to nothing that can be called significant. Mr Milne says of the longer play, usually representative of seriously effective drama, merely this: "One looks forward to the day when there will be two or three first-rate plays worthy of detailed consideration." Of course the number of one-act plays produced is legion and their very number, like the multitude of the acorns, may result in an oak or two. But up to the present the actual robust achievement in the type is almost negligible. A comment

made over the network of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation may justify inclusion here:

> The accumulated inheritance from the past, including yesterday, is not rich. Heavysege and Campbell, among our earlier poets, tried their hands at drama. Campbell lacked a sense of humour and he called his volume *Political Tragedies*. He was right. But Marjorie Pickthall, a later poet, in *The Wood Carver's Wife*, while she gave us more poetry than drama, gave us just enough drama to enable her play to be presented with almost tiresome frequency. Merrill Denison, in *Marsh Hay* with grimness, in *Brothers in Arms* with gay incisiveness, has embedded inescapable Canadianism in reputable dramatic expression. But Merrill Denison has died to Canada in the United States. Mazo de la Roche in *Low Life* and *The Return of the Immigrant*, and latterly in *Whiteoaks*, has given us situation and dialogue and a measure of compelling characterization. *Twenty-Five Cents* by W. Eric Harris, *Ebb Tide* by A. D. M. Fairbairn, and various expressions of protest, with political implications, at our modern economic anomalies suggest that Canadian drama, perhaps by the very compulsion of the art medium, can be human and topical as Canadian poetry and Canadian painting have manifestly failed to be. More and better comedies to which Elsie Park Gowan leads the way with *The Last Cave-Man*, would give an intellectual elasticity and vigour, the strength of sinewy and charming thought, to Canadian drama at present much needed. More symbolism and fantasy would be proof of an imaginative quality as yet lacking. Canadian dramatic script has not thus far given anything like a respectable sufficiency of either ideas or beauty to the Canadian stage. With interesting exceptions, it has tended to be imitative and undisciplined technically, and merely blunderingly sentimental as to theme and topic. The fact is, as yet there has been no *event* in Canadian dramatic authorship. Nothing momentous or even significant has as yet happened. No Canadian dramatist has been driven sufficiently by the imperatives of technical discipline and great ideas to the making of unmistakable art. Just as we have no poetry, no music, little fiction that has demanded the critical attention of cultivated people, so we have as yet no drama fit to demand and find an inevitable audience. It may be that we are still psychologically on the one hand a colony or at most an outpost of Empire and on the other a parasitic appendage to the U.S.A. And that we must wait until our accruing social and political troubles help us to find ourselves.

Many of those who accept this negative appraisal as substantially true find easy excuses. It is said that we are too young a people to be an artistic people; the assumption being we need only time; that our population is a dispersed one without sufficient stimulus from an intricate urban society, an argument a little hard on Montreal and Toronto; that we have been of necessity too busy and too practical to bother about the arts which are apt to be disturbing expressions in a people's life anyway; and that, in any case, we have no theatres. None of these arguments amounts to

more than an acquiescence which is itself but a further manifestation of sterility.

Our real trouble is that we have not come alive as a people. It may never serve us as it served Whitman to talk of "that ecclesiastical, dynastic, aristocratic world over there." But some talk that implies creative independence must come from us. Even the Group of Seven had to wonder eventually whether local landscape and a borrowed method were enough; they never produced a Thomas Benton. There is little passion in Canadian life. Suspicion and jealousy of the United States and admiration for England are not passions. Too many of us check ourselves with misgivings and modifications when we are tempted to claim the magnificent northern half of this North American continent as our own, when we are tempted to say, "We will think about Europe's behaviour, we will think about American civilization and what it means, but we ourselves are also a people with a people's responsibility for self-analysis and self-discovery." By turns respectful, envious, derivative, and resentful, we are never really independent. If art is the impassioned expression of the discovered spirit, it would seem that we are apt (at least the English speaking part of us) to wait long for a Canadian art. The people living in Canada are not interested in spiritual self-discovery. Rather, they seem to fear it. They consider it safer to try to be English, a necessarily impossible aim. To explore, in terms of thought and passion the full implications of this Canadian dilemma, a dilemma analysed by such writers as the Frenchman André Siegfried, is the artist's opportunity; perhaps it is specially the opportunity of the dramatic artist. But we do not breed artists. We are afraid of the vulgar and the inexpedient. Among us, to talk even today as so seeming-gentle an innocent as Washington Irving talked last century would be a breach of good taste.

> For I had read in the works of various philosophers [says Irving] that all animals degenerated in America, and man among the number. A great man of Europe, thought I, must therefore be as superior to a great man of America as a peak of the Alps to a highland of the Hudson; and in this idea I was confirmed by observing the comparative importance and swelling magnitude of many English travellers among us, who, I was assured, were very little people in their own country. I will visit this land of wonders, thought I, and see the gigantic race from which I am degenerated.

Indeed, so spineless have we become that what was sarcasm in Irving might be sober truth for us. By not admitting the necessary

Americanism implicit in our environment we have repudiated a natural source of vitality and have at least been threatened with degeneration. In our very trying to be English we have done a most un-English thing: repudiated the breath of our own heath. This autumn, as dramatic activity resumes, the desperate little groups will begin the search for good plays. But only by accident and occasionally can they be served by Canadian plays even when "Canadian play" is interpreted so broadly as to mean simply a play written by a Canadian, a play out of a Canadian mind on any subject, with any setting whatsoever. Again and again the Canadian festivals have demonstrated this sterility. Canadian schools of the drama wanting first-rate plays for analysis can find few Canadian examples. No university could discover even a small volume of Canadian plays worthy, on account of their positive significance literary or social, the class-room's study. This sterility, it must be repeated, is not adequately explained by talk of the youth of the people or their geographic dispersion or their lack of a theatre. Our first play was written and acted at Port Royal in 1606. We have large centres of population and there is much theatrical activity with interested and curious audiences. What we lack is the basically important thing: the Canadian word, the literature of the drama.

The cause of Canadian artistic sterility lies deep, and no analysis that does not push to the study of the origins of all art and to an analysis of the particular Canadian economic and political dilemma can hope to be fruitful.

We have postponed or been fearful of that analysis. Our criticism has been vague and avuncular. Why should one bend so solicitously over the little Canadian author and give him five cents for not being a bad little boy? Canadian criticism has expended only so much wind as would temper the shorn lamb and the result is a lot of writers who are merely literary sheep. There have been no noble rows over Canadian literature; no warring schools because no vital schools; no grand high words. Canadians, having little or nothing of compelling importance to say, have not needed to spend passion on the how of getting it said most effectively. The result is a double mediocrity, a mediocrity of content and a mediocrity of form. When Matthew Arnold said concerning certain matters of his own day, "Let us try a more disinterested mode of seeing them; let us betake ourselves more to the severer

life of the mind and spirit," he was appealing unwittingly to unborn Canadians; perhaps to the members of the Canadian Authors' Association.

This lack of creative and critical "severity" and robustness in Canadian writing seems to exhibit all the exasperating characteristics of the vicious circle. Critics who admit the dearth in Canadian writing would defend their critical tenderness from the analogy of the seedling plant whose nurture must be guarded in its early stages; severity will wither the delicate beginning. It would seem then that we must wait for the soundly disinterested criticism which might help to create good writing among a people until we get the good writing which remains undeveloped and puny without the criticism by which it might learn to adjust itself and thrive! The fine impatience of a man like Frederick Philip Grove has on one or two occasions swept all this foolishness aside and got on with the positive negative thing that needs to be said, but there are too few wild dogmatists in the world of Canadian letters. The field of the drama has been no exception. The need here is for those who possess authority to tell themselves and others of the derivative, blind, and parasitic nature of their art, to admit the lack of both an objective and a sense of urgency, and to seek for remedies. Surely it is not healthy or respectable for nine Canadian drama festivals never to have evoked a single really important Canadian play, much less a significant body of Canadian drama. Surely Canada is not pulling her weight in the art of the drama if this may be said with truth. It is time someone rebuked us for sitting like sleek and glistening parasites so complacently before drama that gives so infrequently anything out of ourselves. Remedy lies in admitting our sterility and in seeking less superficially for its causes, in having for awhile a more studied concern for the creation of our own plays, though not necessarily thereby less stimulus from the production of the work of others. That we enjoy European and American drama should indeed only raise the quality of our expectation as audiences for our own.

It may be a kind of modesty and a delicate critical sense that makes Canadians content to read the good books, hear the good music, see the good plays, and enjoy the good paintings of other peoples without a thought for their own relative dearth in these arts; it may be that Canadians possess parasitical tendencies created and nourished by the very nature of their physical environment and

their political history. It may be that the arts must struggle against nature in Canada. If so, a wise and directive criticism will tell us that it is so, and why it is so, and whether there is remedy or whether it matters if there be remedy. It is true that we have no national theatre and few private theatres established with their seasons and their distinct character in local centres. But there is a theatre audience in Canada. That audience could engender the sort of critical demand and expectation that encourages the artist, both locally and through such mediums as the *Curtain Call* and the radio. But as audience it would need to take the art of the drama seriously, need to see it related to the social, economic, religious, and political life of a people, need to believe in it as a force to be respected and delighted in, and on occasion hated and feared. Such an audience, even if physically dispersed, could be truly critical and directive in connection with the art of the drama in Canada. Such an audience would by no means be concerned merely for a Canadian subject-matter, scene, and theme. But it would be so convinced of the power of the dramatic art to reveal and enrich life that it would be jealous constantly lest Canadians missed the truest significance of truth and beauty because they saw it only in the English black country and never in Field, B.C., only on the Scottish moors and never on a New Brunswick hillside. For it is one of the great and mysterious ways of art that it is often most powerful in its universality when it is most immediate and local in its homeliness. A Canadian audience, accustomed to find delight and spiritual profit in many alien scenes and in many alien ways of life variously communicating the universal experiences of art, must ask the Canadian artist to begin with themselves, to give their ways and their issues and "isms" to the alchemy of art. Merrill Denison, taking Canadians off a stony countryside back of Kaladar and putting them behind footlights, made some of the indubitable though minor literature of the drama for us out of our own stuff. Gwen Pharis, with an Alberta farm kitchen and the three people in it, did the same. A Canadian audience, expecting and appreciating this sort of thing, is not parochial or narrowly national; it is simply asking for self-revelation from its own artists in its own terms. As Macbeth's "multitudinous seas" was a sudden visual reality for Elizabethan Englishmen so "the wheat like gold on the hills" from Gwen Pharis's play may be quick with familiar experience to the Albertan. The degree of compelling extension beyond

the image depends of course upon the imaginative vision and power of the artist. Canadians have in their own country, in scene and human element and peculiar social, political, and economic complications, the concrete immediate material for a rich dramatic expression. The stuff but awaits the vision and the handling. A people, seemingly lacking creative energy for poetry and the novel, might conceivably discover its opportunity in the drama. The demands of existing Canadian audiences, using their opportunities as critics for hissing and applause, might aid in challenging our writers to more vision and more craft.

More or less formal critical writing in newspapers and periodicals might also be a challenge. The comments on plays in local newspapers, usually so personal with reference to actors and so fatuous in terms of literary and dramatic principles, might take itself and the state of the drama in Canada seriously and might demand a certain proportion and level of Canadian experimentation. The critical and philosophical aspects of our sterility might be discussed in schools and universities, not in the interests of a little Canadianism but in the interests of self-exploration in the life of a young people. At the moment it is inconceivable that anyone could make even a reputable booklet by gathering and sifting the serious critical comment existent in Canada on the art of the drama. A book published as late as last year could be described as "the first all-Canadian text-book on the drama," and it is not without its significance that it was a book entitled *Practical Play Production*, which made no pretence to discussion of critical principles.

When Shaw took the job of dramatic critic for the old London *Saturday Review* he had a viewpoint and an expectation. Looking back on those days and realizing very properly what he had accomplished, he says:

> Only the ablest critics believe that the theatre is really important. In my time none of them would claim for it, as I claimed for it, that it is as important as the church was in the Middle Ages and much more important than the Church was in London in the years under review. . . . When I wrote, I was well aware of what an unofficial census of Sunday worshippers presently proved; that church-going in London has been largely replaced by play-going. This would be a very good thing if the theatre took itself seriously as a factory of thought, a prompter of conscience, an elucidator of social conduct, an armory against despair and dulness, and a temple of the Ascent of Man. I took it seriously in that way and preached about it instead of merely chronicling its news and alternately petting and snubbing it as a licentious but privileged form of public entertainment.

That is the believer talking, the believer in life and in art, in this case the art of the drama. We need Canadian believers in this sense in our audiences, among our critics, and among our writers as a prerequisite to any pretence at significant and original work out of ourselves. The literature of the drama, the word made strong and beautiful, comes out of believers.

It is disconcerting to note how lacking we are in this belief in ourselves and in this power to project our own lives into art. Dr Koch of the University of North Carolina, coming up to give a course to young Canadians and others at the Banff Summer School of Fine Arts, achieved what he felt were promising beginnings when he got young Canadians to write about the northern frontier. Some of them did write out of their own bowels. But the northern frontier is only the romantic fringe on our total life. We are consolidated and mature in a score of ways and possessed of the vices and the comforts, the anomalies and the confusions of modern civilization. Yet if we want our poverty pictured we see *Love on the Dole*; if we want the Oshawa strike reflected in art we let the Americans do it; if we want humour we think only Irishmen or Frenchmen or Americans are funny. What Canadian dramatist, except Merrill Denison who is not Canadian, ever heard a Canadian laugh or considered him a cause of laughter? It would seem that artistically speaking we have no faith, delight, or interest in ourselves. We are an insipid and passionless and inartistic people. From out of us, created by ourselves, not a single volume of poetry, not a single novel, not a single sustained musical composition, not a drama which demands by its own inherent art the critical attention of cultivated critics beyond our borders. We may be known for our apples, our cheeses, our creation of an aeroplane suited to northern travel, but not by any significant contributions made to the world of art. Our rich men do not even think it worth while to make careers in the arts possible to young Canadians through scholarships, prizes, or endowment funds. It is probably assumed that the money would be wasted. On the English-speaking side at least, we are a sterile people and unconcerned. It is because we are not believers in ourselves or in art.

Drama might be the means of our artistic awakening. We have had nine drama festivals built upon much past similar effort. We have summer schools of the drama, and drama is taught at least implicitly in our schools and universities. From Little Theatre green-

room to young peoples' and ladies' aid church societies the country is agog with drama talk and drama doings every autumn. Throughout Canada audiences are so wistful for dramatic entertainment that they will tolerate almost any inanity. Half a dozen playwrights as believers, using our own stuff, talking in our own speechways, possessed of vision and literary power, could direct or redirect all the major currents of our life. At this moment there does not appear to be a single person possessed of the vision, the technical capacity, and the energy to make use of the open opportunity to further the artistic life of a people. We have not bred artists.

But we may begin to do so. Artists are born and made. They are made by social expectation as well as by their own struggles. Social expectation in Canada in connection with the art of the drama might take some of the following forms:

(1) The dramatic activity now so widespread might be extended with more clearly defined aims. The festivals, which have involved a great amount of patient and diplomatic labour, not always rewarded with healthy and kindly criticism, might discover new opportunities and new necessities. They have created an informed interest in drama and have served to develop excellent actors and actresses. A little more ingenuity and patience in the endeavour to develop good Canadian dramatic writing, involving perhaps some shift of viewpoint in some quarters, would give further vitality to a most hopeful expression of our growing culture. The general reading of better plays needs to be encouraged. Provincial and other local societies who distribute plays know the twists in this problem; they know also the necessity of slanting upward the reading and playing of community groups. The summer drama schools should be encouraged to the point where they multiply. Scholarships, such as the University of Alberta offers at Banff, might be arranged at more and more centres. The drama schools might be keyed in more closely to the regional and Dominion drama festivals.

(2) Really substantial annual prizes might be offered for the one-act and full-length plays written by people born in Canada—prizes of three or four thousand dollars on which a writer might travel and study or merely live and loaf for a year. Government or private auspices or a combination of both might provide these prizes. If it is argued that no Canadian could write a play worth three thousand dollars it can be answered that the money is not

merely for the best play of a given year which might be a very poor one, but for the idea of play-making in Canada considered as a citizen's legitimate activity. The substantial prizes for drama would be the proclaimed symbols of the nation's belief in art as a form of national enrichment and a means to self-discovery and self-development.

(3) A franker Canadianism might be encouraged until it is both the artist's opportunity and his impulse. Canadianism has an ominous sound to some ears but if a dramatic artist could penetrate to the centre of our Canadian dilemma and know that he had an audience feeling its way after him we should so vitalize our theatre as an institution of national culture that we might indeed establish a national theatre almost overnight. Van Wyck Brooks, in a recent review, quotes Emerson's talk concerning "casting out the passion of Europe by the passion for America." We cannot talk that way just now, perhaps we should never want to talk that way, but we will glimpse again the time when we can say with Emerson: "We have been East too long; now for the West!"

After all it is our West. We are American, not European, by continental necessity. To realize this is to begin the unification of this country. A sense of the common ground of the continent of America must be fundamental in every Canadian's thinking whether his heart goes out to Italy, Germany, central Europe, or the British Isles. Our Canadian dilemma lies in this, that if the newcomer to our shores be of so-called non-Anglo-Saxon stock we offer him only the chance to change his allegiance from his own European birthland to an alien European country; if we offer him in reality a new country we have in effect broken our own European connection. Canada has yet to work this problem out and as the racial proportions change by immigration, emigration, and the operations of the birth-rate, it may seem more rather than less critical from the Anglo-Saxon standpoint. It is conceivable that the dramatic artist could so set the issues involved in terms of human thought and passion as to unify through sympathy and mutual understanding through the illumination of art a people at present divided, confused, and undetermined. Bred out of ourselves, sensitive to all we are, we should recognize his voice and follow his vision as other peoples have recognized and followed their artists. A school of Canadian dramatists just now, imaginatively alert to all we Canadians have been and may be, might be of the

utmost practical service as directors of the national destiny. The dispersion which is sometimes talked of as an explanation for our artistic sterility is not the mere matter of a thin population widely scattered. The disastrous dispersion is emotional and intellectual. Only the artist with cleaving mind and schooled passion can help us with his symbols and his imagination. Such an artist, the poets and the novelists having thus far failed us, might well be the dramatist. Certainly the conditions are ripe. Let it be said again. This is no petty pleading for an adolescent and gauche nationalism. It is a simple statement of the peculiar need for self-discovery of a people within our geographic limits on a western continent, accompanied by a faith in the power of the artistic imagination. What the historians, the economists, the politicians, the schools, and the churches have worked at in one way and another awaits the creative vigour of the artists. Hitherto we have not bred artists in Canada. Our growing need may now create them. They might be dramatists.

WEIRDNESS IN *THE COMEDY OF ERRORS*

G. R. Elliott

THE "The" in the title of this play may be taken in a generic sense—that is, as the author's characteristically modest intimation that he has provided merely one more species of a well-recognized genus. "Here," says he, "are the Twins of Plautus again; here is the age-old comedy of resemblances." But time has made the "The" distinctive: here is indeed *the* comedy of errors. It is hard to see how the hoary sport of mistaken identities could be better worked up as the central theme of a drama.

I think the underlying reason for its success is the fact that Shakespeare was thoroughly penetrated by the comic horror, so to call it, implicit in the subject. Real horror attaches to the notion of the *complete* identity of two human beings; as in Poe's ghastly tale of a girl who turned out to be the re-embodiment of the mother who died in giving birth to her; and as in certain ancient legends of various lands, notably China. All normal persons (and especially Shakespeare) set so much store by human individuality that they shrink from the thought of its being submerged. And since the amusing, when intense, is nigh to the serious, there is something shuddery in the close resemblance of persons just when this appears to us intensely entertaining. I recall a school-teacher many years ago who found in her class at the beginning of the term two little girls who were remarkably, even weirdly, "identical" twins; the very freckles on their noses seemed to correspond; and of course their proud mother attired them precisely alike. At the end of the first week the teacher exclaimed to us all with comic horror: "These two are the same—how can I tell them apart?" After a moment of dead silence a small boy (not I) piped out, "Mary's temper's better'n Martha's." The general laughter which ensued had in it a note of relief that was not exclusively comic. And *The Comedy of Errors* has a note of real weirdness just when its mirth is keenest.

Another and related feature of this play that has also, I think, not been sufficiently appreciated is its structural excellence. Critics have regarded the piece as uninspired because of its comparatively conventional style. But whole form, no less than style, may be the vehicle of inspiration. And the intensity with which Shake-

speare gave himself here to the limited but uncanny fun of twinship impelled him to weave his strands into a very close and telling pattern; which, moreover, is often subserved, as I shall point out in a striking instance below, by the very conventionality of the style. I think that in sheer composition this drama surpasses most of his early works and some of his mature ones. It testifies that this poet, who was later to achieve the most expressive of styles, set his heart at the outset upon achieving wholeness of form. How much he was *directly* influenced in this matter by the Latin classics (not to speak of the Greek) cannot be known and is not very important. His friend to be, Ben Jonson, who was notoriously more intimate with those classics than he, was capable in maturity of producing such a work as *Bartholomew Fair*, rich in humour and humanity but hopelessly flimsy in architecture; no doubt it made Plautus turn in his grave. Compared with it *The Comedy of Errors*, by a young and "non-classical" writer, is a beautifully carved gem.

Perhaps it was written, as Professor Adams supposes, during or just after a schoolmastering interval before Shakespeare's migration to London.[1] But in this case how did he attain the warm grasp of theatric art that appears in the play? Maybe his histrionic activity began in early years in the country; a discovery of new but dubious evidence pointing in this direction has recently been announced. Maybe, as Professor Adams and others maintain, he rewrote the play after he had attained a mastery of theatric art in London. In any case it is clear that the budding dramatist, more or less influenced by the ancient classical sense of form, was reacting from the slipshod construction of contemporary romantic comedy. And indeed if he had not early been sharply critical of that mode at its lowest—that "most lamentable comedy," in Quince's phrase—he could not have learned how to carry it to its height, as in *Twelfth Night* and *As You Like It*. In this later period he vented through the mouth of Polonius a feeling which must have been at work in him all along, a kindly but critical sense of the amazing variety and confusion of forms in contemporary drama.[2] He desired for his own work the variety without the confusion. From the first he aimed at the sort of drama so tellingly described by Hamlet soon after Polonius's outburst: "an excellent play, well digested in

[1] J. Q. Adams, *Life of Shakespeare*, Boston, 1923, pp. 90-6, 132-3.

[2] *Hamlet*, II, ii, 401-7. In this article line-numbers are those of the Oxford Edition, but the text of that edition is not always adhered to.

the scenes, set down with as much modesty as cunning." Accordingly in his first play (as I take the one under discussion to be) he preferred the "scene individable," the unity of place, to the "poem unlimited"; he followed the "law of writ" rather than "the liberty."

> Why, headstrong liberty is lashed with woe.
> There's nothing situate under heaven's eye
> But hath his bound, in earth, in sea, in sky. . . .[3]

This thought, uttered by the gentle Luciana, is reiterated in Shakespeare's subsequent works. Of course it expresses the ancient doctrine of temperance which the writers of the Renaissance so much admired—often only verbally, but deeply at their best. Hamlet's praise of temperance to the Players and then to Horatio (III, ii, 1-74), voices Shakespeare's very real love of it in art and in personality. For him well-temperedness, as it may better be termed, was a quality both moral and artistic. His writings and the records of his character, taken together, show this quality preponderant in him as man and as author. Often enough his work is poorly tempered, ill shaped. But one sees him continually striving for excellence of form even more than for variety of form. Thus it was natural for him in his earliest comedy to have recourse to the aid of unity of time and place.

Obviously he was free from the pedantic notion that this device is an essential principle of drama. But he saw that the outward sort of unity, observed strictly or approximately, could be an aid to inward form. And he saw that a strict observance of it was demanded by the material and mood of *The Comedy of Errors*. Therefore he confined the action to a single day in a single city, Ephesus, summarizing the antecedent events in Aegeon's narrative in the first scene. No doubt a skipping series of scenes displaying some of those adventures on the stage would have pleased the average audience of the time. But that display would not have fitted the whole emotional pattern at which the author, consciously or not, was aiming and which may be described as follows. An initial mood of swift and strange, almost weird, romance is saturated, as the play proceeds, with fun that is swift, strange, weird. Thus the romance and the fun are congruent. And they are humanized by pathos at the first and last, and, in the central phase

[3] *C. of E.*, II, i, 15ff. Hereafter references to this and other plays are given in brackets in the text.

of the action, by touches of high comedy (comedy of character) involving pathos.

Such is the ideal mood-and-mode, so to speak, of this drama. It was fulfilled to a remarkable extent by the dramatist but, of course, not perfectly. The opening scene is too heavy—especially when its long speeches are not rendered by the actors "trippingly on the tongue." Aegeon's sorrowfulness is immense. The dramatist hints, unconvincingly, that it is not merely the fruit of circumstance: it is constitutional. The old man tells us that he "would gladly have embraced" death (line 69) on a certain occasion when he was still young, rich, and blessed with a happy household! We don't see why; but we see that this stroke is intended to intensify his air of sadness. To be sure that air is convincing and satisfying in such verses as the following (lines 132 ff.):

> Five summers have I spent in furthest Greece,
> Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,
> And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus,
> Hopeless to find—yet loath to leave unsought
> Or that or any place that harbours men.[4]

This has the very rhythm and movement of seeking, yearning love; in contrast with the "hopeless and helpless" rhetoric of the closing lines of the scene:

> Hopeless and helpless doth Aegeon wend,
> But to procrastinate his lifeless end.

On the whole, his story takes hold of us. His emotion helps to float the strange episode of the mast that served as a "helpful ship" (line 103) to save the lives of six, and then to divide them nicely into the two triads required by the plot. But the author fails to bring out unmistakably the sole aspect of the tale that could render it fully plausible, namely its weirdness or uncanniness. Certainly this note is present, but not explicitly enough. In other words, the opening scene, from the standpoint of the play's whole mood, is not well tempered. Relatively too much stress is placed on the pathos of the romance, and too little on its weirdness. This error is not made in the final scene of the play. There the pathetic joy of the recognition and reunion of the members of Aegeon's household is skilfully intermixed with the characteristic comedy of this drama. But though the last scene of a play is important, the first scene is more so. And it is clear that in the present instance, as

[4]The dash in the fourth line is my insertion; the Folio has a comma there.

not in any later comedy, Shakespeare yielded to the temptation of capturing his audience at the outset by means of a heavy dose of heart-appeal.

The second scene, however, is finely turned: it provides exactly the right transition from the initial scene to the main body of the piece. The old despairing Aegeon is immediately succeeded by a young man who demeans himself very gravely. We are artfully informed at once that he too hails from Syracuse. His name, Antipholus, is here withheld from mention on the stage; but in good time we learn that he is in search of "a mother and a brother" (line 39) and we recall his father's reference to him towards the end of the preceding scene (lines 124 ff.). The fine point, however, is that his very air is felt to be *fathered* by Aegeon's, though quite different. The old man's voluble gloom gives place to the son's sober sadness. And this "humour" (mood) is susceptible of lightening. Antipholus, smiling slightly (not laughing, I think), at his Dromio's joke, remarks that the latter is

> A trusty villain, sir, that very oft,
> When I am dull with care and melancholy,
> Lightens my humour with his merry jests.

Thus the mood of the play is modulated in the direction of mirth; and the way is actively opened by Antipholus's determination to relieve his lonely sorrow by wandering up and down in this foreign city, viewing its sights. Note the comic irony of his "I will go lose myself" (line 30), repeated (line 40) just as Dromio of Ephesus enters to take him for his brother. Superb is the sudden but carefully prepared plunge, here, into the comedy of errors. The fact that Antipholus is "not in a sportive mood" is, of course, the soul of the sport. Incidentally the new Dromio is seen by the audience to be brother in soul, even more than in body, to his jestful twin. The closing speech of the scene and act is notable. Antipholus soliloquizes:

> Upon my life, by some device or other
> The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.
> They say this town is full of cozenage;
> As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
> Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
> Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
> Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
> And many such-like liberties of sin. . . .

This sounds the note of weirdness; which, however, is not fully brought out till the close of the second act.

Meanwhile (II, i) high comedy, centred in Adriana, comes upon the scene. From now on, it gleams through the pattern of the play like a thin gold thread, appearing and disappearing. It is closely intertwined with the dominant comedy of action. We cannot imagine Rosalind or Beatrice exclaiming to a servant, "Back, slave, or I will break thy pate across." But it is quite natural for their forerunner, Adriana, to speak thus to Dromio of Ephesus (line 78). Her sister Luciana's rebuke of her—"Fie, how impatience loureth in your face!"—is histrionically revealing; such was the look that Shakespeare intended the boy-actor who "created" this part to employ continually. That look goes along with conduct, potentially at least, violent. And certainly the heroine of this drama has her full share in its mad doings. Yet louring impatience is merely on the surface of her; deep beneath is a devoted, yearning love for her husband. And the conflict of those two emotions in her is high-comic.

There is pathos, too, in her case, but the dramatist carefully subordinates it. When her sister urges her to be patient with her careless husband, Adriana exclaims (II, i, 34 ff.):

> A wretched soul, bruised with adversity,
> We bid be silent when we hear it cry;
> But were we burdened with like weight of pain,
> As much, or more, we would ourselves complain. . . .

True enough. But our sympathy with the speaker is overtopped by amusement at her mood of angry exaggeration. She is far from being a "wretched soul bruised with adversity." Her only real woe, here, is that her husband is very late for dinner. To be sure, she hints that he may be with another woman (line 30). But this suspicion, entirely unfounded so far as the audience knows, is very faint and transient. All the more comical, therefore, is her great blaze of jealousy (lines 87 ff.) when the strange demeanour of Antipholus of Syracuse, mistaken for her husband, has been reported to her. At this juncture the device of mistaken identity is superbly used for comedy of character. Antipholus of Syracuse, unlike his jaunty brother, is gravely moral. When finally he enters Adriana's presence and she regards him as Antipholus of Ephesus, he is exactly the man to "look strange and frown" (II, ii, 119). No wonder his bearing turns Adriana's suspicion into a settled con-

viction. But now comes the finest stroke of all. Confronted with real trouble, with a real evil, as she believes, in her husband's life, her better nature comes to the fore. She drops her initial notion (II, i, 10) that her own way of life should, by rights, be as free as her husband's. She maintains indeed that there should be (in modern parlance) a single standard for both sexes but she urges passionately that it should be pure and high (II, ii, 133):

> Ah! do not tear thyself away from me,
> For know, my love, as easy mayst thou fall[5]
> A drop of water in the breaking gulf
> And take unmingled thence that drop again,
> Without addition or diminishing,
> As take from me thyself and not me too.
> How dearly would it touch thee to the quick
> Shouldst thou but hear I were licentious
> And that this body, consecrate to thee,
> By ruffian lust should be contaminate! . . .
> I *am* possessed with an adulterate blot;[6]
> My blood is mingled with the crime of lust:
> For if we two be one and thou play false
> I do digest the poison of thy flesh,
> Being strumpeted by thy contagion. . . .

How direct and powerful is the style here over against the neat, conventional rhetoric of the preceding quotation! This is one of many instances in the course of the play where Shakespeare's good luck or good revision, or both, enables him to sharpen the style in accordance with the emotion. Here the pathos, by itself, would be too keen for comedy. But it is checked for us, even as Adriana speaks, by the amazed looks of her two Syracusan listeners, wondering what it is all about; and it is submerged by the mirth, madder than ever, that ensues; to which I shall return presently.

In the next scene (III, i) the audience is kept outdoors with Antipholus of Ephesus to watch his obtrusive cheeriness give place to rage, which in turn yields to merry vengefulness; while his double dines with his wife inside. Thus the love and pathos of Adriana are literally kept *within door* at the crucial stage of the plot. Instead we are allowed to witness (III, ii) the slighter episode, couched in conventional rhymed verse, of the Syracusan Antipholus' love for Luciana. And just when that highly moral man has attempted to seize the hand of the gentle girl who believes him to be her sister's husband, Dromio of Syracuse dashes in, escaping the embraces

[5]Fall: let fall. [6]Italics mine.

of the spherical Nell: "Marry, sir, she's the kitchen-wench and all grease; and I know not what use to put her to but to make a lamp of her and run from her by her own light.". . . This sudden explosion of fun from below stairs is a superb burlesque of the goings-on of the principal personages. Nell's mistaking the foreign Dromio for his brother at the end of the third act is the sequel of her mistress Adriana's similar error at the end of the second act. But the parallelism is not forced and obvious, as it so often is in Shakespeare's early work. The two episodes are at once vitally related and vitally different: they are at opposite poles in method and tone. Hence they beautifully complement each other.

More significantly, in each case the hyperbolical tone rises to eeriness. In the close of Act II, Dromio of Syracuse, dazed by the staid Luciana's seconding of her tense sister in taking him and his master for two other persons, cries out (II, ii, 197 ff.):

> Oh for my beads! I cross me for a sinner.
> This is the fairy land; oh, spite of spites,
> We talk with goblins, owls, and elvish sprites!
> If we obey them not, this will ensue,
> They'll suck our breath or pinch us black and blue.

He and his Antipholus are overcome by a dreamlike sense of transformation, romantic in the master, grotesque (" 'Tis so, I am an ass" . . .) in the man. This "complex" occurs again in the finale of Act III, but with overwhelming emphasis on the weird grotesquerie of the situation. Here the mounting hyperbole of Dromio's account of Nell renders dramatically plausible even the premiss that both he and his twin had a similar mark on the shoulder, a mole in the neck, and a great wart on the left arm! These twins are so "identical" that they approach identity. And the vast wench's vast powers of divination cause Dromio, astounded, to run from her "as a witch," in fear of being transformed by her into a bobtail dog at work in the treadmill of her turnspit (III, ii, 151 ff.). Significantly Shakespeare refrains from bringing Nell onto the stage in person. The temptation to do so must have been great; the scene would have rejoiced the hearts of ninety per cent of his audience. But he sacrificed the physical fun of that scene to what we may call the metaphysical fun of Dromio's inspired narrative, culminating in his bizarre picture of the globular wench as a witch. Moreover, Nell's absence from the scene enables the audience to concentrate upon the all-important effect that the tale has on Dromio's master.

"There's none but witches do inhabit here," Antipholus concludes (III, ii, 168). The artfully general and vague premonition that Shakespeare made him utter in the final speech of Act I, quoted earlier, wherein he mentioned "sorcerers" and "witches" among other kinds of cozeners, has been fulfilled with a vengeance. Dromio's story of Nell is the last straw for Antipholus. The fun of the thing impresses this earnest gentleman far less than its weirdness. If the wench who claims his man for her betrothed is a sorceress, all the more so is "She that doth call me husband"; and he abhors Adriana "for a wife" as utterly as Dromio does Nell, though on higher grounds. These comparisons between his own and Dromio's case are not stated explicitly; Shakespeare's art is here too fine for that; but they are clearly implied in his speech. And the climactic implication is that even the sensible and normal Luciana is infected by the prevalent atmosphere of sorcery in which she lives. She,

> Possessed with such a sovereign gentle grace,
> Of such *enchanting* presence and discourse,
> Hath almost made me traitor to myself. . . .

The last line recalls the comic irony of his desire to lose himself, at the first, in this strange city (I, ii, 30, 40). And the word that I have italicized in the second line is deliciously ambiguous. By way of developing the equivoque we may say that the *bewitching* Luciana, as Antipholus now sees the matter in retrospect, put him almost *beside himself*. The more he made love to her, the more she insisted he was not himself; he was another man, well known to her, her brother-in-law unfortunately, making immoral advances to her. And he, so the implication runs, had been almost ready to lose his own identity if only thus he could win her interest. But now, "lest myself be guilty of self-wrong," he is determined to fly from the girl who a little while ago feared and fled from him; she is doubly an enchantress: "I'll stop my ears against the mermaid's song."

He must speedily get away from this city, which he had felt at the first to be "full of cozenage" when it seemed that some "cheater" had made away with "all my money" (I, ii, 97 ff.). But now an event of exactly opposite nature occurs as he is hastily moving off. A cheerful and trustful citizen enters, hands him a fine gold chain, refuses present payment, and terms him, what he least is, "a merry man, sir." It takes a good actor to represent

Antipholus's state of mind in this masterly finale of the third act. He is so stunned that at first he can only ask weakly, "What is your will that I shall do with this?" In the upshot, despite his scrupulous nature, he retains the chain. Why? Because one feature of this illusive city is, apparently, the giving of "such golden gifts" to strangers in the streets. Because, in short, Antipholus's mood, together with the mood of the play, has now become thoroughly fey.

That mood may be traced by the reader in many passages that cannot be treated here. It is worked up more and more during the course of the first three acts and dominates the remainder of the piece. In Act IV the arrest of Antipholus of Ephesus, prominent and wealthy citizen, for the supposed theft of the gold chain brings this personage fully into the atmosphere of enchantment. Hitherto he had moved only in the outskirts of it; his healthy gaiety kept him aloof. At the end of III, i, he had determined to meet his domestic complexities with level head and mirthful heart. But now the increasing complications are too much for him. Soon he is wearing "pale and deadly looks" (IV, iv, 94), or at least something approximating thereto sufficiently for Pinch and others to imagine him insane. A similar look, we may assume, is on the face of Antipholus of Syracuse when he comes on at the close of this act with drawn sword, resolved finally to escape those whom he calls "these witches." Thus the two male principals co-operate, now, to intensify the note of bewitchment.

This note might easily have been overdone by Shakespeare. Of course he offsets the serious desperation of the two masters by the humorous desperation of the two servants, especially Dromio of Syracuse with his persistent nightmare of Nell: "but for the mountain of mad flesh that claims marriage of me, I could find it in my heart to stay here still, and turn witch" (IV, iv, 155 ff.). A further offset to the two Antipholuses is needed, however, and it is provided by Pinch, the conjuring schoolmaster of "saffron face" (IV, iv, 62). Later his complete appearance is given retrospectively by Antipholus of Ephesus (V, i, 238 ff.):

> a hungry lean-faced villain,
> A mere anatomy, a mountebank,
> A threadbare juggler, and a fortune-teller,
> A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
> A living dead man. . . .

In passing, notice that these words echo the tone-setting speech of

Antipholus of Syracuse, at the end of the first act, upon jugglers, sorcerers, and so forth. Pinch is a tonal masterpiece. His pedantic gravity parodies and relieves the increasing angry seriousness of the two Antipholuses. But, above all, he bodies forth concretely the play's spirit of weird fun.

Adriana, again, contributes to that mood. Convinced that her husband has tried to make love to her sister, she vents her rage in a monstrous picturization of him (IV, ii, 19 ff.):

> He is deformed, crooked, old and sere,
> Ill-faced, worse bodied, shapeless everywhere;
> Vicious, ungentle, foolish, blunt, unkind,
> Stigmatical in making, worse in mind.

Her wrathful, hyperbolic fancy is a better conjurer than Pinch. But the pathos and high comedy of her, though kept subordinate, come out in frequent touches. She closes the present episode with this simple cry: "My heart prays for him, though my tongue do curse." (The subjunctive "do" is nicely suggestive.) Thus we are prepared for the effective dialogue of Adriana and the Abbess early in the last act. Religiously beguiled by the older woman into confessing her fault, Adriana hugely exaggerates her scoldings of her husband (V, i, 62 ff.) and is rebuked by the Abbess, with proportional severity, as the sole cause of his supposed madness. She makes no reply—to the utter astonishment of her sister, who, reversing her customary role as critic of Adriana's impatience, has now to exclaim, "Why bear you these rebukes and answer not?" The other says simply, "She did betray me to my own reproof." Her difficult silence is Adriana's self-imposed penance. Recalling her earlier line, quoted above, we may say that her heart is now praying so entirely for her husband that her tongue, so far from cursing, has no word even of proper self-defence.

That serious touch, together with the ensuing speech of the Second Merchant concerning "the melancholy vale" (V, i, 120), leads up to the re-entrance of the hapless and gloomy Aegeon. But, as remarked earlier, his pathos is not allowed anything like free rein here. He stands in the background during the long climax of the story of Antipholus of Ephesus. This episode opens with Adriana's line, "A most outrageous fit of madness took him" (line 139), and terminates with the Duke's "I think you are *all* mated or stark mad" (line 282, italics mine).[7] The note of witchery

[7]Mated: stupefied and confused.

is explicitly given by Adriana's fear that her husband "is borne about invisible" (line 187) and the Duke's fancy that "you all have drunk in Circe's cup" (line 271). Upon the close of this episode Aegeon is allowed the centre of the stage for fifty lines. The pathos of his appeal to him whom he takes to be "my only son" is very moving, but, of course, it is checked by his mistaking Antipholus of Ephesus for him of Syracuse. Thus Aegeon is drawn into the atmosphere of illusion; so is even the stiff-backed Duke a little later (line 366). The tearful joys of the reunion of the old man's family are finely interwoven with enchanting mistakes (lines 332-416), and parodied at the close by the conference of the two Dromios. When Dromio of Syracuse declares to his new-found brother (italics mine),

> There is a fat *friend* at your master's house
> That kitchened me for you today at dinner:
> She now shall be my *sister*, *not* my wife . . .

the speaker's sense of relief is as vast as the girth of Nell. This speech brings us back towards everyday reality. Yet it reminds us, surely, of this Dromio's dread of Nell as a "diviner" and a "witch" (III, ii, 150 ff.). Thus at the close there is a faint, last flicker of the ray of weird light, romantic and comic, that plays upon *The* Comedy of Errors.

REVIEWS

PATTERNS IN SHAKESPEARE

R. S. Knox

That the artist may be unaware of the full implications of his art, and that it falls to the interpreting critic to make these explicit, is a fashionable doctrine today. It is the doctrine on which are based the findings of two recent books on Shakespeare. The first of these is a series of lectures given by Professor H. B. Charlton in the John Rylands Library, and now collected under the title of *Shakespearian Comedy*.[1] Mr Charlton's purpose is to trace throughout the plays the growth of Shakespeare's "idea" of comedy.

> To talk of an idea of comedy, and to talk about it as one must for such exposition as is now being attempted, may seem to imply a clear consciousness of such things in the mind of the dramatist. But that, it must be insisted, is very wide of the mark. A dramatist's creative power is essentially different from, and largely independent of, his pure reason. The life he imaginatively apprehends may remain, and indeed most frequently does remain, entirely unanalysed and unsystematised by his reason. But when the life he creates by his art displays the completeness of an organic unity, the principles implied in it or presupposed by it may be inquired into, and formulated, though but imperfectly. The formulation of them will be in terms which, more often than not, would appear to the dramatist himself as more or less unintelligible irrelevancies. Shakespeare, it is certain, had no theory of comedy. But his genius created a "comic" world. To trace the evolution of his idea of comedy is to follow the stages by which his presentation of the "comic" grew into the creation of a universe which was complete in itself and was held together by its capacity to convince the imagination of man that the fundamental laws of it correspond to man's sense of what he himself is and what, in its essence, is the world in which he lives.

The vagueness of the last-quoted sentence is unusual in the writing, and the underlying contention is elsewhere made clear. A comedy is a play which ends happily. The happiness must not be an arbitrary imposition, but must issue from the temperament and attitude of the protagonist. He must be such a person as would conquer circumstances; and the circumstances must be characteristic of those we know in life. Throughout his comedies Shakespeare is unconsciously seeking the ideal hero who "must succeed because of those traits of human nature which render

[1] *Shakespearian Comedy*, by H. B. Charlton, Macmillan, 1938, $4.00.

human beings most loveable, most loving and most serviceable to the general good." In the end the hero turns out to be a heroine, Rosalind, Viola, Beatrice. These are the figures "in whom heart and mind, intuition and reason, work in unison—the spirit of comedy incarnate."

In a brief Preliminary Mr Charlton defends his approach, and has a timely protest against the latest school of interpreters who, he thinks, have allowed their appreciation of Donne to distort their valuation of Shakespeare. "To our most modern critics, drama is poetry or it is nothing; and by poetry they mean some sort of allegorical arabesque in which the images of Shakespeare's plays are far more important than their men and women. To these critics characterisation is rather an accidental than an essential element in drama, and all that really counts is the mystically symbolic patterning of tonal and visual form."

Having made it clear that he is still sufficiently old-fashioned to believe that drama is a representation of action and that the actors are more or less like human beings, he proceeds to examine the procession of the plays and to assess each as it contributes or fails to contribute to the consummation reached in the mature comedies.

His chapters on the early plays are the richest in the book. With acuteness and an easily carried erudition he discusses the problem which faced Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists generally, the difficulty of accommodating the world of romance and all its implications to the service of comedy. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* is the most vivid evidence. And yet one might reasonably disagree with the deductions Mr Charlton draws from his examination of this play. "Valentine," he says, "bids for the sympathy, but not for the laughter of the audience. . . . Unintentionally Launce has become the means by which the incompatibilities and the unrealities of romantic postulates are laid bare." Is it so certain that Launce's clowning parodies are unintentional, or that Shakespeare was blind to the fun in the antics of his romantic young men? He, at any rate, made Speed see the jest on Valentine's romantic stupidity, and so presumably saw it himself. Indeed this reading of the play, that Shakespeare was aware of the ridiculousness to which the romantic conventions led, would equally well explain the succeeding phase with which Mr Charlton deals, Shakespeare's recoil from romanticism and his burlesque of its wooing mysteries in *The Taming of the Shrew*. There followed

A Midsummer Night's Dream, admittedly Shakespeare's first big forward step; but one is surprised, to say the least, at the aspect of the play chosen to reveal the nature of the advance. Shakespeare, it is argued, is now facing the vital problem which in *The Taming of the Shrew* he had boisterously evaded. He is now recognizing the reality of romance, the primacy of love in man's life, is driving home the truth that healthy love must end in marriage. The worldly wisdom of Theseus, intent on his nuptials, is set up as the ideal. Against his robust sanity and success the whimsies of the lovers are shown up. So too are the undomesticated, irresponsible beings of fairyland. "The exposure of Oberon and Titania's conjugal relationship is comedy fulfilling its natural function, glorifying those settled institutions of man's social existence which owe their persistence to mankind's experience that such as these make for his welfare in the substantial problem of living life in the world as the world is." A heavy weight, indeed, to pitch at the fairy gossamer. One recalls, perhaps maliciously, Puck's comment on us mortals. And even Bottom is made to contribute to the play's moral: "He is sufficient assurance that, though nature makes men liable to love, it gives them also so much mortal grossness that man can never distil himself to a mere airy spirit."

Mr Charlton's use of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* to prove his general thesis is forced and disappointing. Whatever may be the argument in question, it is surely warping the play to find Shakespeare consciously or unconsciously propounding such a lesson. The evidence drawn from Falstaff is no more convincing. His reliance on pure reason for the evaluation of experience is seen as carrying Theseus' attitude further. "Mastery of circumstance is his pride; it is also his supreme qualification to be a hero of comedy." But he lets Shakespeare down. His conduct on the eve of Shrewsbury, his denial of the supreme values of love, faith, truth, and honour, disqualified him for the role and disgusted his creator. We blame Henry for callously casting him off, but the dramatist is the real culprit. Falstaff had failed Shakespeare. "Hence Shakespeare's bitter disillusionment and his willingness to call the contemptible caricature of *The Merry Wives* by the name of Sir John." Before we object we must recall what Mr Charlton is doing. He is tracing the growth towards Shakespeare's perfect comic hero, with all the postulated attributes. Two of these are respectability and the power to make a success of things. Falstaff lacked these.

He was no Rosalind or Viola; and the story was against him. But can we soberly say that in Shakespeare's estimate the girls who happen to follow overtop Falstaff in the part? Is it, even in a metaphorical sense, just to speak of Shakespeare's bitter disillusionment? After all he did go out of his way to inform us that Sir John went to Arthur's bosom. Mr Charlton himself insists that in Shakespearian interpretation we should bow to the "community of wise opinion." Ask it, then, who is Shakespeare's supreme figure in comedy!

With Sir John discarded, Shakespeare, we are asked to imagine, cast about for someone bigger and better, "one who would by nature be endowed with a sense for those forces in human life which enrich it immeasurably and which for Falstaff, had been as if they were not." That chapter in Shakespeare's artistic life, we are told, is falsely named the Dark Comedies. In his commentary on those Mr Charlton further stirs our admiration and our doubts. He rightly puts aside the notion of an underlying mood of bitter cynicism. Indeed, far from being a bridge linking a serene comic mood to the tragedies, they reveal "Shakespeare's effort to recover the spirit of comedy . . . an intense impulse to discover the true sources of nobility in man and of joy in life. . . . They are the road by which Shakespeare climbed from the misleading comedy of Falstaff to the richer and more satisfying comic air of *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *Much Ado*." With various figures are associated those worthier life-values which Falstaff, the common-sense rationalist, had denied. Isabella and Helena, relying on "the prompture of the heart," are the bringers of joy to themselves and to others. The wisdom of Ulysses and the blackening of Achilles drive home the argument that the duty of the individual is to society. The standard set up by the Duke Vincentio and by Shakespeare is service. Throughout *Troilus and Cressida* runs the conflict between reason and the impulses; and Hector recognizes the validity of both. Troilus in his carnal ecstasy is useless to his city; at the play's end he is a greater asset to the world, and Cressida less a source of harm. Moreover, the limitations of the Falstaff creed, with its denial of the spiritual life, are in these plays persistently exposed, in Thersites and in Parolles, who is "Falstaff viewed with other eyes." (One can imagine Falstaff's reply to such "gross o'erreaching as this.")

So, through the period of trial, we reach the mature comedies

and those heroines in whom Shakespeare expressed all the comedy graces and especially the equipoise of heart and head, his ideal of the worthy life. There "comedy is seeking in its own artistic way to elucidate the moral art of securing happiness by translating the stubbornness of fortune into a quiet and a sweet existence."

Shakespearian Comedy is a book of capital importance. In the early chapters especially there is a wealth of new pertinent scholarship and wise commentary. Nevertheless, many will remain sceptical not so much of the main contention as of the validity of the steps in the argument. Too often one is left with the impression that the interpretation of the evidence—the asserted significance of Theseus' marriage, of Falstaff's rejection, of Troilus' final mood—reveals Mr Charlton's own predilections and ingenuity rather than the unconscious working of Shakespeare's mind.

Mr Charlton dismisses the late Romances as adding nothing of moment to the dramatist's idea of comedy. He finds in them a distinct decline in dramatic power, evidenced in the fundamental art of characterization. They are "an old man's consolation for the inescapable harshness of man's position." In no sense are they to be taken as an answer to the tragedies. It is precisely in this way, as an answer and supplement to the tragedies, that the Romances are regarded by Mr E. M. W. Tillyard in his latest book.[2] He too delves below the dramatist's deliberate intentions to reveal the intuitive and inevitable shaping of the art. As an explanation of the peculiar nature of the last plays, Mr Tillyard weighs and puts aside Strachey's view of a bored Shakespeare interested only in poetry, and also the biographical theory of Shakespeare convalescent in the quiet of Stratford after his "tragic" break-down. More, he admits, is to be said for the supposed influence of Beaumont and Fletcher, but that is a mere surface matter. The Romances must be seen as varying expressions of an essential part of the tragic pattern. Tragedy has its three phases, prosperity, destruction, and re-creation. In the Romances the whole pattern is given or implied, but the stress is now on the regeneration. Even in the great tragedies, we are asked to believe, there was this final note of hope, this "birth of a new order." Is not Lear redeemed through his suffering? Is not Othello in his final soliloquy "a man of more capacious mind than the Othello who first meets us"? And so

[2] *Shakespeare's Last Plays*, by E. M. W. Tillyard, Chatto and Windus, 1938, $1.00.

Mr Tillyard strains to make his point, bringing as further evidence the fall and promised rise of England's fortunes in the History plays and the final note of exaltation in *Antony and Cleopatra.* Indeed in *Antony and Cleopatra* Shakespeare was beginning his process of transition to the Romances. But there is this distinction: while Antony and Cleopatra "abandon their errors without transmuting them," in the last plays there is a complete regeneration, "a melting down of the old vessel and a recasting of it into something new." Nevertheless, says Mr Tillyard, Shakespeare found *Cymbeline* stubborn stuff to shape adequately into his scheme of the tragic cycle. The King's regeneration is left "a thing quite dead," and the portrayal of Imogen, with its blend of realism and the symbolism which Shakespeare's new purpose demands, becomes blurred and bloodless. Even the two brothers, "symbols of the kingly nature blowing in wild surroundings," and of the new life, are only minor successes. It is in *The Winter's Tale* that Shakespeare's purpose is achieved. There the whole tragic pattern is in full view of the audience, the destruction set over against the new birth, represented by Perdita and the idyllic pastoralism; and now the problem of adjusting realism and symbol is "so well solved that we are quite unconscious of it." We are asked to note that Apollo, the symbol of fertility, is the dominant god; and, to add a contribution, we might point to the vivid image of the whole process in Hermione's resurrection. With more forcing *The Tempest* is fitted into the scheme. Here Prospero's calamity, occasioned by over-study (his tragic error, we are assured), is thrown into the past, but within the play the tragedy is re-enacted, if not in the opening storm-scene, as Dover Wilson suggested, certainly by the Antonio-Sebastian conspiracy. The regeneration is in Prospero himself, but this is strengthened by the new world of Miranda and Ferdinand. Miranda is the symbol of "original virtue," but also of fertility. If you doubt this, you are offered as part proof Caliban's lure to Stephano:

> She will become thy bed, I warrant,
> And bring forth brave brood.

We must at all costs impose an order and an inner meaning on Shakespeare's drama; and the Romances, with their likeness in sentiment, their hope in the beauty and innocence of the young, have especially lent themselves to this. If Shakespeare's art here must be reduced to a formula, there are a score which can be forced

to fit. The completion of the tragic pattern fits as well as any, although we doubt Mr Tillyard's initial postulate that in Shakespearian tragedy there is for the hero "the birth of a new order."

In the second part of his book, Mr Tillyard discusses what he calls "Planes of Reality" in the Romances. His contention is that Shakespeare is expressing "something that can be vaguely called metaphysical, some sense of the complexity of existence, of the different planes on which human life can be lived." This is expressed by the very mixture of stuff out of which these last plays are shaped, by the presentment of an incident from different points of view or in differing media, like the two storms in *The Tempest*, the opening realism and the fairy storm which Prospero describes. The new contrasts of style throughout the plays and the new treatment of character, the blend of symbolism with realism, fortify the expression of this sense of different worlds. And all this is based on what we ourselves experience in life, the change of mood by which the solid or ordinary becomes unreal, and "the real things are not everyday acts but passionate mental activities." Of course this recognition of differing worlds, not uncommon in art, had found expression in Shakespeare's previous drama, more so than Mr Tillyard allows. He cites *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and asserts that there, as not in the Romances, the dramatist had sought to impose a unity, allowing one plane to dominate the rest. *Antony and Cleopatra* he again sees as a transitional play in that "Shakespeare no longer seeks to unify, rather he seeks to emphasise by juxtaposition those worlds which once he had ventured to arrange." But surely in a far subtler sense, *Hamlet*, the play and the man, reveals this changing vision. The Romances, Mr Tillyard finds, vary in the effectiveness of their use of planes of reality. In *Cymbeline* the result is a queer phantasmagoric welter; *The Winter's Tale* avoids this blurring and presents a clean contrast; in *The Tempest* the sense of planes permeates the whole play. At this late date in Shakespearian interpretation we must be thankful for the gleaning of any little "significances," but we must know them for what they are.

That we must not take the work of analytic scholars too seriously is one of the main themes in *Shakespeare Criticism*,[3] a discursive, quotation-ridden, but often wise and wittily-worded book by Mr C.

[3] *Shakespeare Criticism: An Essay in Synthesis*, by C. Narayana Menon, Oxford University Press, 1938, $1.75.

Narayana Menon of the Benares Hindu University. What does all the scholarship spent on the plays profit us? he would ask; and his answer is: Look in thy heart and read. "It is we who are Hamlet. . . . He reveals to us a secret part of ourselves, so that the proper study leads to self-knowledge." The great artist reaches to and reveals the "cosmic." We can each see the truth in part and no man can see the whole. Mr Menon, like Mr Charlton, has no doubt whatever that character is the centre of drama, that "all critical study of Hamlet must be psychological." For those who would put situation first he has no patience. "Situation *is* character." The scene of Hamlet's moralizing in the graveyard, without our previous knowledge of the man, would mean little or nothing.

There follows an arraignment of the kinds of criticism and scholarship which are largely irrelevant and only serve to blur the transparency of Shakespeare's art. The study of the dramatist's technique discovers only mechanism where there is life. This is the error in Mr Stoll's contention that the spectator is asked to accept the convention of Iago's impenetrability. "Shakespeare, filled with Othello's emotion, wrote as he did; and the spectator whose heart is not dead will respond to that emotion. He will perceive neither the impenetrability nor an artifice to hide it." We identify ourselves with Othello, "and the ingenuity or otherwise of Iago's intrigue does not engage our minds, because it does not engage Othello's." To be fair to Mr Stoll we have, of course, to remember his equal insistence that the art hides the artifice. Moreover, the spectator knows Iago as Othello does not. But Mr Menon's main attack is against the irrelevancies of the historical approach; and here the blows fall all round. He strikes at those who gleefully assert *Hamlet's* incoherence because it is a stratification. The play's consistency is "proven by its popularity." Shakespeare's change in the old story was to shift the light from the outside to the inside. The study of Shakespeare's life or his environment, of contemporary thought and beliefs, leads nowhere. "The essential Shakespeare is not a dead relic kept in the British Museum; he is alive in every man who dares to be himself." "The student may read a hundred books about the dark lady of the Sonnets and yet remain unmoved by *Antony and Cleopatra*; if, however, he has ever fallen under the spell of a dark lady of his acquaintance, he will know what the play depicts. We retain the power to

be moved by dark ladies; that is enough." And there is a timely hit at scholarly dogmatism: "Thus each scholar arrives at definite conclusions, and thereafter denies the validity of every interpretation—except his own! When others disagree, he thinks it is because they have not undergone the requisite training. 'Have you read the life of Essex?' or 'Have you been initiated into the secret doctrine of symbolism?' asks the scholar. 'If not, how can you presume to understand Shakespeare?'"

The bigoted enthusiasm of the scholar has always been easy prey, but Mr Menon is no ignorant scoffer. He has erudition behind him; and his main thesis that a knowledge of life will take us deeper into Shakespeare than a knowledge of books, is a truth which in these days of intensive research bears re-telling. On the other hand, his own faith in "subjectivity" can become quite as ridiculous and contradictory. We are all equally right, he cries, if we rely on our unaided response to Shakespeare; "the child's appreciation is as valid as Saintsbury's." This does not seem to be a dig at Saintsbury, but if we substitute Bradley, would Mr Menon agree? We might have picked Mr Menon himself, but his own later chapters on the tragedies make us prefer his favourite critic.

That research can be at once scholarly, humane, and pertinent, is amply proved by the last book under review. *Shakespeare's Boy Actors*,[4] by Mr W. Robertson Davies. Here is a clean, straightforward piece of work, with no frills in thought or style, which seeks to examine "the technique used in constructing the women's parts in Shakespeare's plays, and to attempt some determination of the extent to which Elizabethan drama was restricted or set free by the convention of the boy actor." That it was wholly restricted was and still is a common notion. Granville-Barker had countered this view, and now Mr Davies, from a further inquiry, fortifies the denial. As a prelude he gathers together what can be discovered about the Elizabethan manner of acting and the training of the boys. The acting, it seems, was full-blooded with expansive gestures, although this had to be accommodated to scenes of extraordinary delicacy. Shakespeare hits at the "strutting player," although, on the other hand, Mr Davies accepts the tradition that the dramatist trained his own actors. One excellent point is made here with respect to the nature of the illusion provided by the

[4] *Shakespeare's Boy Actors*, by W. Robertson Davies, J. M. Dent & Sons, 1939, $3.25.

Elizabethan theatre, that the blend of formalism and realism in the dramatic method, the "breaking of the conventions," which T. S. Eliot dislikes, was a strength and not a weakness, providing a medium unmatched in its adaptability. And Mr Davies, who throughout has his eye on stage production, condemns not only the Victorian exaggerated realism but "the dreariness of certain recent experiments in which the plays are performed in symbolic illumination in front of a symbolic background."

The main part of the book is an examination of the women's roles in the plays, and its contention is that Shakespeare skilfully eases the parts, so that the boy actors are not called upon to go beyond their technical resources. This is argued interestingly but not always convincingly. It may be true of the tragedies that the burden of the acting falls on the man, but is it true, as here asserted, of the comedies? Again can it be said, when we recall the Juliet "potion" scene, that no part allotted to a boy player demands highly emotional acting, or, against the evidence of the ending of *Antony and Cleopatra*, that Shakespeare never entrusts a boy with a death scene? The indecencies of speech which Shakespeare sometimes gives his women Mr Davies is inclined to attribute as much to the use of the boys as to the taste of the time; and, assessing the kisses and embraces, he takes issue with Granville-Barker's finding that Shakespeare spares his boys the embarrassment of physical love-making. It obviously depends on one's notion of the embarrassing; but, with whatever gusto the boys may have taken the wooing scenes, it could scarcely be said that Shakespeare is in the modern sense a daring dramatic amorist. Mr Davies makes no pedantic plea for the revival of the convention of boy actors, but he does draw a sensible moral for the actress: "When she has a clear notion of her role from the boy actor's point of view, she may inject into it just as much of herself and of her particular feminine quality as her artistic conscience will allow, and the result should be a performance with a clear and coherent outline, shorn of irrelevant and irritating externals and presenting the part in the brilliant colours in which Shakespeare drew it."

PORTRAIT OF STENDHAL*

W. F. Giese

"One is a Stendhalian, or one is not; there is no middle ground," says the oracular Alain. Professor F. C. Green, in his life of Stendhal, has tried to avoid thus committing himself. He aims at being the recorder rather than the judge. He would let the facts speak. He narrates blandly and engagingly; he interprets indulgently; he steers, though ever so gently, toward the admirative attitude. He almost seems at times an honorary, if not an active, Stendhalian. The angularities, the asperities, the eccentricities, above all the cynicism of Stendhal appear just a little veiled despite the frank massing of the often very damaging facts. Is M. Alain right, after all? The critical reader will remain a little puzzled. Mr Green refrains from the flaunting tolerance, akin to cynicism, of the Stendhalians of the straiter sect; but he also visibly shuns the out-and-out intolerance of evil of the once-upon-a-time Victorians, whose still small voice is likely even now to become articulate in some candid reviewer for whom morality is three-fourths of life.

Mr Green is reluctant to see in Stendhal an immoralist, and so takes him, as many do, for a serious moralist. He sides with many —not all—of the sect in attributing to Stendhal "a fundamental generosity of soul," and he finds in him a lifelong "nostalgia for the heights," which is even "the authentic signature of his work." For him Stendhal is a man uniquely and devotedly bent on truth. "He lied to every comer as a cricket sings," said his devoted cousin Colomb, and Carpani, whom Stendhal had plagiarized, said to him: "You would steal the smoke off a candle." Mr Green light-heartedly relegates the research into Stendhal's plagiarisms to the *rats de bibliothèque*. Yet M. Hazard, the chief rat, thinks that this ever more fruitful exploration may alter our estimate of Stendhal's whole work. Mr Green himself admits that Stendhal's boast that he won the favours of his benefactor's wife, Madame Daru, is "a monstrous lie," and finds in him here "a curious blend of exalted passion, fatuous obtuseness, and the grossest indelicacy." Appar-

**Stendhal*, by F. C. Green, [Drapers' Professor of French at Cambridge, formerly Professor of French in University College, Toronto] Cambridge University Press, 1939, $4.50.

ently the life-long nostalgia for the heights suffered protracted intermissions. The devotion to truth suffered them likewise. Mr Green candidly recognizes this, and paints Stendhal as a strangely complicated character so superior to the spineless and hypocritic world around him that he was forced to put on a cynical mask; he was "a harlequin whose character is one of gravity," to use Stendhal's own words. Mr Green actually speaks of "the spotless purity which, at nineteen, had glowed in his soul like a shielded flame"—forgetting that, at seventeen, a precocious reader of Laclos and of the *Fredaines de Félicie*, Stendhal had gone to Paris, "with the set purpose of becoming a seducer of women," and that, at twenty, he indited a "libertine's catechism." Let us quote it: "Amuse a woman, and you will get her." Mr Green honestly keeps us informed about the long procession of women whom Stendhal amused—and got.

This biographic approach has its advantages. The eccentric originality of Stendhal's temper is rendered more piquant, and also more plausible, by so much illustrative action. Such evolution (easily exaggerated) as his thought shows is carefully and skilfully mapped; its genesis is convincingly traced back to experience and temperament. Mr Green has presented a very lifelike and pleasing —perhaps a bit too pleasing—portrait of Stendhal, a well-documented and scholarly and, in general, non-committal narrative which leaves us fairly free to reconstruct this Protean personality less sympathetically, if we so choose, than his good-natured biographer.

But the biographic method has also its restrictions. Are Stendhal's life, his character, the genesis of his thought, the things that are of vital interest to his readers? The nature of his thought is of more interest than its sources; his artistry, his influence intellectual and moral, his philosophy of life, these are the things by which he stands or falls. Mr Green is too much a critic to neglect these matters, but even his very liberal infusion of criticism into the arrested narrative is not enough. It is excellently suggestive; it cannot well be more than that. It remains summary. Stendhal's *beylisme*, the central feature of his work, is not very impressively presented. It remains perforce in the background. To Mr Green it seems almost the disguise of an exquisite soul, rather than the *égotisme le plus absolu* which it purports to be.

Either point of view needs the abundant buttressing that is only possible in a critical discussion.

Such limitations one feels particularly in the treatment of the novels—the only works of Stendhal that really matter to anyone but the specialist. These are, fortunately, lifted out of the narrative stream for a longer time than the average reader will relish—yet not long enough to content the serious reader of those puzzling productions. Mr Green's reactions are fully and well presented, but how about the other side of the story? No novels have been so diversely judged. Mr Green finds in Julien Sorel, as in his creator (*Julien c'est moi*), a fundamental generosity of soul. Zola even found him "the noblest nature in the world." Bourget found his history "as tender and dreamy as it is infernal." In the same vein Julien is here very ingeniously (though to my mind quite incredibly) pictured as a compound of the noble Alceste with Iago, Tartuffe, and the assassin Berthet, plus Stendhal! The worshipful Taine—after eighty readings—found him "too odious." For Sainte-Beuve he was an impossible monster. To Mérimée he seemed atrocious—the usual verdict. Similar variations appear in the estimate of Fabrice and la Sanseverina. Some critics idolize the novels; others find them cold, dull, even unreadable, a poison-cabinet, a major scandal. Balzac called the *Chartreuse* the greatest of all novels, as do Gide and Maurice Hewlett. Faguet found it half, even three-fourths, unreadable, and called the author an *imbécile*. Flaubert, like Brunetière and Saintsbury, found it a bore. Not so Mr Green. For him it embodies "a Correggian dream of sweetness and grace," it is "authentic Italian of the period." The great Italian scholar Renier irately denounces it as a *miserando cibreo*. Surely some discussion of such variations would be highly opportune, and Mr Green's very satisfactory treatment of such minor works as *De l'Amour* makes one regret that he has refrained. But in any case, for those who believe with Stendhal that *le plaisir est tout*, this book offers a fascinating story.

NEW LIGHT ON LIONEL JOHNSON*

E. K. Brown

The first book on Lionel Johnson appears thirty-seven years after his death: it is a doctoral thesis presented to the Sorbonne by a young Canadian scholar. Despite the many references to Johnson in contemporary memoirs, Mr Patrick has added richly to knowledge of his life and character. Miss Isabella Johnson, the poet's sister and the custodian of his papers, generously allowed a very free use of unpublished material, among which were the manuscripts of poems, undergraduate speeches and essays, addresses given in later years to such different groups as the Dublin National Literary Society and the students of the Roman Catholic diocese of Southwark, letters to and from such friends as Walter Pater, Arthur Galton (Johnson's intimate as an undergraduate and, as we now learn, a principal influence in his development), and Katherine Tynan. From such a wealth of new material (some of which he might wisely have printed in full in an appendix) Mr Patrick has been able to correct in some essentials the conception of Johnson which is getting into the literary histories.

Many of the peculiarities of Johnson's style, for example his punctuation, are shown to have derived from the eighteenth century. His standards of aesthetic judgment, like his standards of conduct, were an individual blending of classical and catholic ideals. His conversion to Roman Catholicism is shown to have been from motives utterly unlike those which animated Dowson and other more crapulous characters of the time—whom Johnson knew. To Johnson gorgeous ceremonies and elaborate rites made little appeal: religion was to him much too grave and torturing a reality to be clothed in romantic trappings. Apart from his besetting vice—drunkenness, not a roistering drunkenness but a searing secret dipsomania—his life had in growing measure a classical regularity and poise. In approaching his character it is to be steadily remembered that he was the son and grandson of soldiers: he may have disliked his family and their mode of life but he bore conspicuously and profoundly the impress of their

**Lionel Johnson (1867-1902) poète et critique*, by Arthur W. Patrick, Paris, Librairie L. Rodstein, 1939, 25 francs.

virtues. Mr Patrick makes it very plain indeed that Johnson was not a decadent.

The first third of the thesis is biographical: it cannot be overpraised, although one wishes that a large number of the illuminating documents on which the author has drawn might have been set before us in an appendix. The remainder of the book is critical, and more vulnerable. In the preface we are warned that Mr Patrick will explain and describe, rather than appraise: but it is certain even before we see Mr Patrick at work explaining and describing that the method will not work. Johnson's criticism is a notable example of fixed principles steadily applied; and as Professor Robert Shafer saw when he edited a group of Johnson's essays, one must enter into the controversies which Johnson provoked or aggravated. There is space but for one slight instance of the weakness of Mr Patrick's method. Johnson extolled Patmore as a great poet, the intellectual equal of Browning; Mr Patrick has not stayed to ask himself whether the praise was sense or folly. As a result we find him endorsing it when, unconsciously deviating into appraisal, he says that, along with Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, the leading masters of Victorian poetry are—Christina Rossetti and Patmore. When one's purpose is to explain and describe, it is easy to be thrown off one's critical guard and accept all the pronouncements of one's author as canonical.

With a reservation as to the method adopted, one may say that the critical part of Mr Patrick's thesis will be extremely useful. Apart from his book on Hardy—to which a long chapter is given—all Johnson's prose appeared in magazines and newspapers, much of it anonymously. Of the two hundred and twenty articles listed in the admirable bibliography, no fewer than eighty are now identified for the first time. One may hope that to the collection, *Post Liminium* (edited with a daring in soldering articles together which takes one's breath away), and the slighter collection made by Mr Shafer, a third will be added. In his scanty leisure as an instructor in a Winnipeg high school, Mr Patrick may yet find time to prepare an anthology of Johnson's prose—some of the best of it is in letters as yet unpublished—which would display the austerity of formal structure which underlies and supports the richness of its detail.

TWO STUDIES OF D. H. LAWRENCE*

HERBERT DAVIS

Most of the books about D. H. Lawrence have been written by his closest friends, whose relationship with him we know, whether they became afterwards disciples or enemies. These are different. One is written by a biographer, with the pseudonym Hugh Kingsmill, who has formerly given us studies of Matthew Arnold, Frank Harris, and Samuel Johnson; the other is a critical essay on the work of Lawrence by Professor Paul de Reul of the University of Brussels, who has been chiefly concerned with extensive studies of Swinburne and Browning. Both rely for their material on Lawrence's own writings, his correspondence, and the memoirs which have appeared since his death.

Hugh Kingsmill's book seems to have been mainly prompted by an active dislike of the personality and the art of Lawrence; or it may be regarded as an attack upon the Lawrence cult. It is a rapid and effective account of the romantic or pathetic comedy, in which Lawrence and his friends had their parts—a curious mixed company held together by their inexplicable and constantly varying relationships with this strange central figure, who seems on the evidence provided here to have been an ill-balanced and dangerous prophet, and a troublesome if not objectionable person. If we had never read them, we should get the impression that his writings were a mass of fustian and wordy romantic nonsense, except for an occasional bit of fun, a surprisingly vivid passage of description, or a scrap of convincing dialogue. The force and intensity of his work, the abounding vitality which prevents even his most extravagant rhetoric and his annoying repetitions from becoming empty and dull, the ability to put into his words so recklessly and carelessly the whole of himself, his pettiness as well as his greatness, his crude gropings as well as his imaginative perceptions, his rough arrogance as well as his charm—all the richness, the splendour, the energy of his work is neither illustrated nor admitted.

This is not altogether due to any unfairness or bias in Hugh

*D. H. Lawrence, by Hugh Kingsmill, Methuen, 1938, $3.50.

L'Oeuvre de D. H. Lawrence, par Paul de Reul, Librairie philosophique, Paris, J. Vrin, 1937, 25 *fr.*

Kingsmill; it is due to his method of writing literary biography. He is concerned with the study of Lawrence's character, interpreting the facts of his life according to a certain psychological theory, and using his novels and poems and letters for a further supply of material chosen to illustrate his conception of the man. His own bias is shown chiefly in a certain snobbishness, which leads him to treat Lawrence as a social outsider, who owed some of his early success to our silly romantic notions about the genius of the miner's son; and he meets Lawrence's challenge to be considered, when all such flippant and common things are put aside, as a passionately religious man, by insisting that Lawrence tried to "formulate a completely materialistic philosophy, with the flesh or blood as the originating force in a man, the mind as a rather unnecessary and officious adjunct, and the heart and spirit omitted altogether." And then he adds triumphantly: "Here is the last ditch of materialism, in which in every age a few desperate persons, sick of society and the world, but still tied to the will, fight to promulgate the idea that happiness depends on an absence of ideas." And to prevent our astonished protest he tries to frighten us with a real bogey, by calling Lawrence a sort of "rarefied Hitler."

Hugh Kingsmill is entertaining, and knows better than to interrupt the pleasant easy flow of his small-talk by any really serious consideration of the significant clash of ideas in what we used to call the post-War period. But he might at least have stopped to consider why Lawrence did not find himself more at home in this world, if he were really a "last-ditch materialist"; and it would be a very interesting problem to show the connection between some of the most romantic and extravagant ideas, which he tried to embody in such a book as *The Plumed Serpent*, and that flood of resurgent paganism which has swept across Europe and brought with it such disastrous and terrifying results.

This is still only a book of memoirs about Lawrence and his friends; there is no room in it for literary criticism. A few disparaging remarks are included about his art as a writer of prose or verse, and occasionally the spirit of scornful amusement becomes so irrepressible as to burst forth in raillery like this: "Not so lush as *The Rainbow* and *Women in Love*, *The Plumed Serpent* is at least as preposterous; the difference in verisimilitude being only such as might exist between one of Tennyson's Idylls of the King rewritten

in a madhouse by Dostoieffsky, and Rider Haggard's *She* transposed by Nietzsche into the style of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*."

M. Paul de Reul, on the other hand, has attempted a critical study of the work of Lawrence, in which the aim has been to make clear his attitude as a prophet, and to examine his art both as a novelist and as a poet. The manner is quiet and unpretentious; sometimes almost too restrained and academic to be convincing. M. de Reul is often content to make notes, modifying or correcting the comments of others; and, in trying to cover the whole of the voluminous writings of Lawrence, he has not given himself the opportunity of working out his own ideas fully enough. There are some admirable sentences showing a fine literary judgment, but the movement of the argument as a whole is so staccato as to disturb the process of reading.

Some space might have been saved here and there in the chapters devoted to the novels and short stories by omitting the short descriptions of theme and plot, where they were not absolutely necessary for purposes of illustration. But these same chapters contain for the first time a real attempt to analyse the qualities of such novels as *Women in Love* and *The Plumed Serpent* without disregarding the specific aims which Lawrence had set before him and the new conception of the novel which he tried to experiment with in *The Rainbow* and the books that followed it. He is also particularly successful in his examination of the *Poems*, where, though often disturbed by their formlessness, he never fails to recognize the intensity and freshness which is their particular charm. But again we are tantalized by suggestions lightly scattered, noting echoes of Swinburne, Browning, or Hardy, or modifications of the methods of the Imagists. And remembering M. de Reul's former studies in the poetry of the nineteenth century, we should have been glad if he could have extended much further his examination of the *Poems*, and tried to indicate the importance of Lawrence's wide range of experiment in verse-forms and in diction, which was prompted by his attempt to force every kind of expression, however spontaneous or banal, to serve his purpose.

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